

21 July 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, Caregivers, Staff and Pupils

Welcome Back

We are delighted to have activity on our campus again as we have welcomed back the various grades through the staggered start of term. We look forward to a productive and enjoyable term ahead while hoping for as little disruption as possible. Thank you to all of our Oakhill community for their patience and support as we prepared for returning to school while also continuing to accommodate the online learning where required. As we return to campus it is important to establish a good academic rhythm and routine and it is therefore essential that children do not shift from online to onsite learning or visa versa without legitimate reasons. Please inform the school should your child's circumstances change in this regard.

While our academic campus may be open for classes, please note that our sports campus remains closed for now.

Covid-19

We need to continuously reflect on how our behaviour can contribute to the spread of the virus and its impact on the school and the broader community. It is critically important that children do not attend school if they are in any way unwell and certainly not if they are presenting with any Covid-19 symptoms. We are most appreciative of the cooperation and compliance of our pupils to our protocols but this can easily be compromised if children attend school while unwell. Please keep the school informed should you or your family be affected by the Covid virus and please self isolate should you start presenting with Covid symptoms. When informing the school please contact/email the class teacher or mentor and copy in the Prep and College secretary.

Staff changes

Over the years, there has been a debate surrounding the housekeeping department, and whether it would create more efficiencies to rather outsource this function. Covid-19 and the new health and safety requirements have, however forced our hand to a certain degree in that we have had to look at ensuring that we focus on our core business, which is teaching, and ensure that something as essential as the cleaning of the school, is done and managed by the professionals.

We did the relevant cost analysis to ensure that we are not incurring more than budgeted expenditure, and we put the tender out to the relevant professionals. After much deliberation, the decision was taken by the Board and school management team to appoint Servest Cleaning as the service provider to take over the Housekeeping function of the school.

This was not an easy decision as we knew that we were potentially affecting seven much loved staff members, and so as part of the negotiation with Servest, we asked that they retain whichever of our current staff were interested in the positions. You will therefore see a couple of familiar faces in the Servest team.

The school has been impacted financially by Covid-19, and there is no certainty as to when this will start to ease, and how the various levels of Lockdown will impact our lives. For this reason, we have had to take a serious look at our current staff and where roles and responsibilities can potentially be replaced by technology, absorbed by other staff, or outsourced when the need arises. For these reasons, we have had to follow a process of retrenchment with our Receptionist, Heather Mayne, and our Festival Coordinator, Terri Pautz. This too has been a very difficult process as these individuals have been with our school for a long time. We wish them well and we would like to extend a message of gratitude to them for their many years of service.

It is with sadness that our time with Vivienne Davidson has come to an end and she is officially retiring, with effect from 30 June 2020. Catherine Grootboom has taken up the role of Academic administrator for the College and Prep schools and will be based in the Prep Office where she also takes up Prep school secretary duties. Catherine Grootboom can be contacted at c.grootboom@oakhill.co.za. An automated switchboard will now allow you to select the department or personnel you require, or alternatively request or revert back to the Admin office for further assistance.

The Head of Prep and Head of College offices have both moved to the main administration block. The Prep Head will now be based in the office on the left as you enter reception, looking towards the Prep school, while the Head of College will be in the office overlooking the walkway towards the College. Lyndall Hill will be the PA to both Heads. Marketing and Finance will still be based in the main administration building while Lauren Reynders, responsible for Operations, moves to the office opposite the clothing shop.

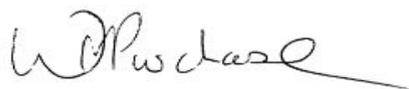
Uitsig Road

On behalf of the Oakhill school community we would like to extend a very big thank you to Knysna Municipality for initiating and completing the road resurfacing of Uitsig Street, as well as the retaining sholin walling. We are sure that you will agree that this has improved the road to Oakhill enormously.

As we continue to adapt to these extraordinary times we are truly grateful for the support and involvement of our school community. It is in all our best interests to ensure that we continue to respect the restrictions and protocols that we have to follow.

We wish you health and strength as we work together towards a productive and enjoyable term ahead.

Kind regards



Wayne Purchase
Head of College



James Cross
Head of Prep