

7 December 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, Caregivers , Teachers and Students,

WE MADE IT !! And what an incredible year it has been especially after everything that's transpired. It feels like five years squashed into one! The analogy of the world as a sleeping tiger, mentioned in an earlier letter of mine, where we tend to live our lives on its back and now and then that tiger wakes up and causes incredible disruptions, is certainly still apt. Just as we thought we were back to some normality in the fourth term, the resurgence of positive Covid-19 cases on the Garden Route in November and its impact on the school community jolted us wide awake again and highlighted the need for us to remain vigilant in the fight against the virus. Herewith a short overview of the fourth term.



ACADEMICS

All grades returned to campus in the fourth term which was very beneficial in consolidating knowledge and skills so that our students could feel confident going into the end of year examinations. Teachers enjoyed seeing all their classes on a daily basis and being able to interact with them. Communication from our teachers still continues to feature as a strength continuing demonstrating our core values of collaboration and relationship building. Despite the disruptive year, our students showed incredible grit and resilience and ended the year off well demonstrated by the pleasing set of results achieved in Grades 8 to 11. Reports will be issued this afternoon. Furthermore, we are confident that our Matrics will live up to their potential and excel. We look forward to sharing in their success when the final Matric results are released on 19 February 2021.

Curriculum innovation

I am very pleased to report that our curriculum innovation hub is up and running and in full preparation mode to roll out an integrated project-based learning programme for next year for the Grade 8s and 9s (working across grade groups) as well as the Grade 10s. It is a wonderfully dynamic space where teachers are committed to further preparing our pupils for meaningful, satisfying, and sustainable lives in a world where technology is fundamentally transforming learning, work, play, and well-being. At the core of the development of this programme is to further develop the skills of collaboration; communication; critical thinking and creativity (4C's) as well as integrating some of the following top 10 skills recently identified by the World Economic Forum in their 2025 jobs report:

- Analytical thinking and innovation
- Active learning and learning strategies
- Complex problem-solving
- Critical-thinking and analysis
- Creativity, originality and initiative
- Leadership and social influence
- Technology use, monitoring and control
- Technology design and programming
- Resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility
- Reasoning, problem solving and ideation

OAKHILL SIGNATURE EVENTS



Grade 10 Odyssey

We were thrilled that this year's Odyssey was able to take place. Three groups departed in the beginning of November after five days of quarantine to ensure that groups could form their own 'family bubbles' so that

masks didn't have to be worn especially for the challenging hiking and cycling legs of the journey. All groups returned at the end of November to an enthusiastic welcome from pupils, teachers and parents.

The Grade 10 Odyssey is undoubtedly one of Oakhill's signature and defining events. I was very fortunate to be able to get some insight into the Grade 10s experience of the Odyssey through letters they had penned halfway through their journey. It was very heartening to read about how most of them spoke about overcoming challenges with teamwork (and realizing its power!) and that nobody is an island, as well as their ability to reflect on their experiences (the good, bad and ugly!), and how it has impacted them as a person as well as acknowledging their privilege.

We extend our gratitude to Colin Wylie, the group leaders and teachers, as well as Ms Hannalie Viljoen for all their hard work in planning, coordinating and leading this year's Odyssey ensuring its success.

Matric Valediction and Celebration of Excellence

We were fortunate to have been able to host this event for the matrices this year due the restrictions being lifted to Level 1. It provided a wonderful sense of closure amidst a year of many matric 'lasts' not being able to take place. The event was split over two evenings so as to keep within the required Covid protocols. It was very heartwarming to see the thoughtful and affirming speeches made by the teachers to celebrate their students demonstrating once again one of the core values of Oakhill - relationship-centered education. We extend our gratitude to Mrs Mel Cloete, Mrs Karine Trollip, and Ms Melanie Vogt as well as to all the teachers that presented speeches for ensuring a successful and heartfelt evening.

Matric Dinner

Another event the Matrics were grateful for was the Matric Dinner. The Grade 11 committee of parents and pupils did a stirring job of creating a magical evening. We extend our gratitude to the committee and Ms Juliet Le Fleur for all their hard work putting it all together as well as the fundraising undertaken throughout the year.

Grade 8 to 11 Celebration of Excellence

This will take place in the beginning of the new term in 2021. Depending on the status of the response to Covid-19 at the time, it will be either hosted at the Oakhill Sports Campus with parents invited or as part of an assembly just for students and teachers.

Oakhill Christmas Market @ The Lofts Boutique Hotel

Unfortunately this annual event had to be cancelled; however, the team are looking at other opportunities for 2021.



SPORT

School sporting programmes found it the most challenging to find some traction during a pandemic with all the strict Covid protocols that had to be followed. Our programme, with a focus on skills and fitness, gained some traction in Term 4 with the lifting of restrictions to a Level 1 near the end of October. All sporting codes were permitted to undergo training; coaching and have sports matches (with a cap of participants) with no spectators allowed. Unfortunately, there was not much time to make use of this opportunity before the Grades had to commence with their examinations. Physical Education lessons still continued during the academic day for the Grade 8s and 9s until they commenced with their examinations. Planning for next year has been particularly challenging with the latest

resurgence of Covid-19 cases on the Garden Route. Most sporting associations have not put fixtures together for next year; and have ceased all training and sports matches from mid-November until further notice. This will need continuous consideration and reevaluation for the beginning of 2021.

CULTURALS



The school's cultural programme gained more traction in the fourth term with pupils being back on campus and are continuing to produce excellent creative work. Music lessons and band rehearsals also commenced in full with all the necessary COVID-19 protocols and procedures in place. The College band provided the music for the return of the Grade 10 Odyssey groups much to the delight of the school community.

A highlight of the fourth term was the Matric Art Exhibition and the Matric Drama practicals that took place in the middle of October. Nine matric art students exhibited at Knysna Mall and the standard was exceptional. The exhibition also created the opportunity to take photographs of all the artworks to meet the IEB requirements of submitting artworks digitally for marking and moderation due to Covid-19. Our drama students provided some excellent performances despite having to perform in a limited performance space to accommodate being filmed and recorded which was then submitted digitally to be assessed and moderated by the IEB examiner. Our Grade 11 students doing their Grade 7 music practicals also had to contend with doing them digitally for the examiners in London. Covid-19 has certainly come with challenges requiring much adaptability from our teachers and students which they have done with aplomb.

STAFF NEWS



We bid farewell to Ms Juliet Le Fleur (Life Sciences); Mr Chicco Ponela (Sports department) and Ms Louise Fourie (Afrikaans) at the end of this term. We thank them for their impressive number of years of committed service to Oakhill and wish them well in their future endeavours.

Mr Jacobus Nel has been appointed as the Life Sciences teacher from the beginning of 2021. He has a wealth of experience both locally at DBE and IEB schools and internationally at IB and Cambridge curriculum schools. Jacobus is also an avid cyclist and keen photographer as well as a well-regarded athletics coach. In addition to his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Stellenbosch, Jacobus holds a masters in Management of Development from the Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands.

Ms Denise Du Plooy has been appointed as the new Afrikaans teacher for 2021 and comes from the Mountain Cambridge School in Hartbeespoort. She has also solid experience in DBE, IEB and Cambridge curriculum schools and has a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Pretoria. Denise is also passionate about social responsibility programmes and is very keen to immerse herself in these at Oakhill.

From our strategic planning sessions in the beginning of Term 4, a need for a more focused approach to certain phases in the College was identified. Mrs Sonja Victor will be heading up the GET phase (Grade 8 & 9) and Mrs Melanie Cloete the FET phase (Grade 10-12). In addition to these posts, Dr Herman Kitshoff will be heading up the Learning Programme and Administration portfolio and Ms Colette Rügheimer will be the Cultural representative on the College Executive. Mrs Anel Swanepoel will be the Matric Dance and Fundraising Coordinator. Mrs Diana Barnard is heading up the Operational Hub that looks at the compilation of timetables and other necessary operational needs of the College. The

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THE JOY OF LEARNING

Grade Mentors for 2021 are: Grade 8 (Mrs Sonja Victor); Grade 9 (Ms Kate Buchanan); Grade 10 (Mr Kevin Kruger); Grade 11 (Ms Anel Swanepoel) and Grade 12 (Mrs Melanie Cloete). We wish them the best of success in their roles.

Thank you

I would like to thank Rob McCall and the Oakhill Board for all their support over the last year. The Board is certainly a strength of Oakhill with its passion and commitment in ensuring the school's success and longevity.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to all the teachers, you are certainly special people! Your passion for teaching as well as your commitment to ensuring the best for all your pupils is truly remarkable! I would also like to thank the administrative and support staff for all their efforts behind the scenes that kept the school running so well over the last year.

Whilst my tenure at Oakhill has been short, I have certainly enjoyed my time at this very special school and wish the Board and the school community all the best whilst still navigating these very interesting times.

In closing, I would like to end with this quote I used in my Matric valedictory speech which is very fitting for this year: *'And don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It's already tomorrow in Australia!* From Charlie Brown and Snoopy from the Peanut comic strips (Charles Schulz).

Kind regards

Wayne Purchase
Head of College