



5 January 2021

Dear Parents, Guardians and Caregivers

Compliments of the season to you all. We trust that you have been able to enjoy a reprieve from the challenges of last year and that you were able to savour some good family time and some well-deserved rest. On behalf of all the staff at Oakhill, we wish you and yours a happy and prosperous year despite the very real challenges that still remain.

On the 28th of December, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that South Africa would be moving to an Adjusted Lockdown Level 3. These regulations would remain in effect until 15 January when they will be re-assessed. The move to the Adjusted Level 3 Lockdown restrictions was largely due to the sustained increase in COVID-19 infections as well as the emergence of a new, more transmissible variant.

Following this announcement, ISASA (Independent Schools Association of South Africa) has advised independent schools to delay their re-opening. By starting a week later than planned, schools will be able to make decisions and adaptations based on the President's next announcement on or around the 15th of January. Many independent schools around the country are, upon this recommendation, adjusting their re-opening dates in response to recent developments. With these factors in mind and following thorough deliberation with the school Executive we have decided to **reopen school on 20 January 2021** rather than the original date of 13 January 2021.

By starting school a week later we also hope to mitigate the impact of travel to and from this region over the festive season. We urge the Oakhill community to act in accordance with the latest restrictions and to limit contact with others and remain vigilant when following health protocols. We believe that with these measures in place we have a far better chance of starting the academic year safely and productively. We will compensate for academic time lost and this may require a slight adjustment to our academic calendar should this be required.

Our academic staff will return to school as originally planned for staff development and also to prepare for the possibility of once again adopting a blended model of teaching and learning should this be required. As a school we will continue to accommodate families who have legitimate health concerns and who are unable, under present conditions, to return to school.



Please take note of the following rescheduled dates for the start of the 2021 academic year:

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| Monday 18 January | 08:30 | Grade 8 Pupil Meeting |
| | 14:00 | Welcome and introduction of new IP children |
| Tuesday 19 January | 08:30 | Grade 8 Pupil Meeting |
| | 09:00 | Welcome and introduction of new FP and Little Oaks children |
| Wednesday 20 January | 07:40 | Start of term College |
| | 08:00 | Start of term Prep School |
| | 08:30 | Start of term Little Oaks |

Please note that the school shop will also be open every morning next week (Monday 11 to Friday 15 January) from 08:30 - 11:30. There will be a limit of two customers in the shop at a time.

Further school or phase specific information regarding the start of term will be shared with you by the relevant staff in due course. We realise that these changes may inconvenience families but we are truly grateful for your understanding as we try to negotiate the current challenges.

With the support of our Oakhill community we were able to have a productive and meaningful academic year in 2021. If we act responsibly as a community, and continue to adhere to our school based protocols, we are confident that we will soon be in a good academic rhythm and hopefully see the other aspects of our school life return as restrictions relax.

We wish you and your family health and strength as we start the year and thank you for your continued support.

Kindest regards

James Cross
Head of Prep

Sharon Brown
Acting Head of College