

13 April 2021

Dear College Parents and Pupils

Term 2 is ready and waiting to get going with a bang! We welcome our Oakhill Community back and I trust that we will be able to share in a productive, meaningful, and happy term ahead. A focus for this term, at least, is *Self-care and Wellness*. We have a number of interventions planned to support this focus and staff will keep these aspects in mind when interacting with pupils.

The holiday period has been a busy time at Oakhill: Parents of Grade 10s were thrilled to welcome their children back from The Odyssey on 30 and 31 March, and on 1 April. It was a real treat to be able to warmly receive our happy and fit youngsters home.

Academic campus upgrades

After a lengthy investigative process, we have installed back-up batteries for our server that will allow the wifi to continue to operate in the event of load shedding in the future. Allsound Security has also installed CCTV cameras at certain locations around the school to improve security.

We have a regular process where an arborist examines the blue gum trees on the campus. This year we were advised that the blue gum next to the Tuck Shop needed to be removed, as it has died and was a health risk to the school due to the possibility of falling branches. This work was tackled after the Easter weekend and the other two gums have also been pruned to remove all dangerous branches. Our gardens have been refreshed ready for the new term and in particular the plant containers in the quad have been spruced up with new plants.

Certain College classrooms have benefitted from some maintenance work and we are thrilled to be able to announce that an extra window has been added to Room 1 (Kate Buchanan's classroom) to improve the air circulation and quality in that venue. As I write this newsletter, I am hopeful that the venue will be ready and waiting for students this week. Room 2, Dr Kitshoff's classroom, has also received some attention with the replacement of the ceiling and painting. The fans in all College classrooms have been replaced where necessary and all rooms will be able to ensure good air circulation and ventilation, so vital at this stage.

Covid-19 updates and co-curricular activities

As we continue to manage the threat of the COVID-19 virus, I would like to once again ask that, as the Oakhill community, we continue to respect the regulations, protocols, and recommendations that continue to remain in effect.

The recent Government Gazette of 27 March has outlined conditions under which schools may return to more formal sporting and cultural activities including the accommodation of inter-school fixtures. This information

has been well received by our school and the sports department in particular who have already started exploring the opportunities that these new regulations offer us. Further information in this regard and the possible amendments to co-curricular programmes will be communicated to you by the sports office. Please note that **College co-curricular activities will commence on the first day of school** (Wednesday 14 April).

The gazette also clearly stipulates that all co-curricular activities, training, and potential fixtures may only continue providing that there are **no spectators**. This sadly means that our current restrictions on access to our school campus and the OSC by parents or spectators will remain in effect. Parents are reminded to remain in the parking area at the OSC when collecting or dropping off children and that they may not access the sports campus and clubhouse, which is for the use of children, officials, and staff. While these conditions are not ideal, we would ask that all parents respect these measures so that we can ensure that our children have the most safe, meaningful, and enjoyable sporting experience possible under the circumstances.

Sport review and new projects

As with all spheres of endeavour at Oakhill, we are constantly striving to raise the bar in our sport programme. Our school has a proud history of punching above its weight while offering sports that allow our pupils to find their niche, as well as being competitive against some of the top independent schools in South Africa. Sport is a vital part of any student's development and plays an important role in their health and well being, both of mind and body. As has been mentioned in previous communication, the Board has instituted an in depth, independent review of all aspects around sport at the school – the operating model and programme (including personnel: management, coaching, and administration), our sport philosophy and vision, infrastructure and facilities.

The review, which runs until the end of June, involves;

- Individual meetings with current and former coaches, parents, and staff
- Online surveys of current and former pupils, and alumni, followed by focus groups addressing specific issues raised
- Observation of physical education classes and sport practises
- A review of policies, job descriptions, previous surveys and current programmes
- An assessment of existing facilities in terms of the proposed sport policy.

Anyone who wishes to contribute any information or assist in any way should contact Conan Olivier at 082 060 3255 or c.olivier@oakhill.co.za

For ease of reference we have [included the brochure](#) sent out in recent correspondence from The Board detailing the short term sport projects at the OSC. These projects are planned to be completed before the end of the fourth term.

Parent & student forums

The Elevate team will be on campus to work with some groups on Wednesday 14 April. There will also be a parent webinar on Wednesday evening. Those who are not receiving input from Elevate this time will have academic lessons. This information has been communicated to the College students. Elevate will return to Oakhill again on Friday, 23 April.

If you would like to have more information about Elevate, there will be a **parent information session** via webinar tomorrow evening, Wednesday 14 April at 18h00. To join the meeting please use [this link](#).

Healthcare Practitioner and Clinical Psychologist, Gus van Niekerk, will be giving a talk to our Grade 8, 9 and 10 students dealing with risky behaviours. This will be followed up by a Parent Forum open to all College Parents in the school hall, titled “***Your Teen and Risky Behaviour - how to listen and how to help***” on Thursday, 22 April at 18h00. The invitation will be shared with you and I really encourage you to attend this talk.

This term we also see the roll out of The Guardian Anonymous Reporting App. A letter will be shared with the College parents and students to introduce everyone to this app in the coming days.

School arrival

As we move into the winter term with shorter days and darker mornings, please make every effort to ensure that your children arrive at school on time. Timing should make allowance to complete the compulsory screening process on arrival at school into account. Arriving at school late is disruptive to the mentor process and unsettling for the individual concerned.

We are ever mindful of the busy traffic flow at the front of school and would like to ask all members of our community to assist us in managing this responsibly and safely. Please remain ever mindful of the high volumes of children in this space and adhere to the signage as well as the drop and go areas that apply. For clarity on the procedures in this respect, please refer to the updated information contained in [this link](#).

Pupils who make use of the Plett bus are reminded that it is important to book timeously for the week ahead. Please note that those who have not booked an afternoon bus may be asked to catch a later bus in order to accommodate those that have booked in advance.

Parent teacher meetings

The College staff will be available for parent-teacher meetings in week 2 (19 - 23 April) and week 3 (28 - 29 April). An online booking form will be made available from tomorrow and you will be guided how to choose your time with the various teachers. We have made 10 minute meetings available. The calendar will indicate when teachers are available. While we prefer to meet virtually via Google Meets at this stage, some parents

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may prefer to visit the campus for a face to face meeting. If you choose to visit the campus, please remember that you will be required to complete the screening process at security before coming into the College area. If you book a Meet, we ask that you use your child's Oakhill account for the Meets. For details on how to book please follow [this link](#) to the site.

S-Tests and exams

The standardised test programme will commence next Wednesday (21 April) and will run until the examinations start. The Grade 11 exams will start with the Art Practical exams that commence on Thursday, 20 May at 13:30. The Grade 12 exams will begin on Friday 21 May. Grade 8, 9 and 10 exams will start on Monday, 31 May. The standardised test programme was shared with all students last term. The examination timetables will be published during the course of the week.

As already stated, the term promises to be busy, and we encourage everyone to get back into the habit of monitoring the College calendar to see what lies ahead each week. The link to the calendar can be found on the website and [here](#).

Wishing you and yours strength, health, and happiness for the term ahead. Thank you for your continued support of our school.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'S Brown'.

Mrs Sharon Brown
Acting Head of College