

1 December 2021

Dear College Parents, Guardians and Students

The academic year draws to a close for our students today - and what a year it has been. On behalf of the College Staff, I thank everyone for walking the road with us.

The final weeks have been pretty frenetic as the College has packed a number of events which usually happen earlier in the year into these final days as teachers and students have also grappled with the year-end examinations.

The matric cohort completed their examinations on Friday 26 November. With careful planning and creative logistics we were able to celebrate the group at a split Valediction Dinner on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. This premier milestone event in the life of our students remains a treasured event on our calendar and we were very thankful to be able to fête our matrics albeit in two sessions. Then the matrics attended their Matric Dinner Dance on Friday evening.

Thanks to everyone who supported the College and attended our annual Celebration of Excellence on Saturday morning. Weather conditions meant that we had to be nimble once again, and we are grateful that the NG Church allowed us access to their large hall for the function. We were so happy to be able to gather together to celebrate the successes of so many of our students. We held this gathering despite the foreboding cloud of the rise in Covid numbers in South Africa.

Students and teachers have focused on the review of exam papers this week. Students had an opportunity to check their scripts and teachers were able to deal with some areas of concern. The last days of term after exams do tend to be problematic. Students want to be able to relax and start their holiday. Therefore I thank everyone who did attend school this week and helped to keep some academic momentum going.

In my reflections on the year, I thought that this is a good opportunity to remind everyone, staff, students and parents that the apparently less formal approach in the College can be misunderstood by people who do not see the clear thinking, strong structure and deliberateness which underpins everything that we do. The informal tone and what can be seen as relaxed relationships that can develop makes students feel at home. However, there is structure that provides them with the predictability that makes them feel safe enough to explore fearlessly. We are a school where our students are encouraged to apply their minds, not only to master the content but more importantly, to be able to form an opinion and to apply knowledge in unfamiliar contexts. The thinking that we encourage and teach is modelled by the staff, as we strive to ensure relevance and innovation. Among other things, this year the Grade 8, 9 and 10 groups completed a module on Project

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Based Learning. This proved to be a learning experience for everyone in the College and we look forward to seeing what next year's module will bring.

Our Grade 11s have been able to experience their Leadership Camp this week, and we look forward to their matric year when they will be our student leaders. I await their insights and positive plans with anticipation.

Parents, thank you for your dedicated support this year and for everything you have done to help keep your child/children focused on the end goal.

Students, thank you for "hanging in there", for adjusting when we were thrown curved balls by the pandemic and being able to adapt and adjust as was needed; and showing everyone that ultimately, the Oakhill community is strong and resilient.

Colleagues, thank you for everything that you do every day for our community. Thank you for juggling the online, in class and blended teaching models you seemingly managed so effortlessly. I know that it took planning and effort.

Together, the team of parents, students and teachers has resulted in a year where we successfully weathered the curved balls of the Covid pandemic. Our students have done themselves proud.

We look forward to welcoming our Oakhill family, as well as a number of new families, back in the New Year.

Kind regards



Mrs Sharon Brown
Head of College