



Dear Oakhill School family

While we are already well underway for the year, I would like to wish everyone a wonderful, prosperous and fulfilling year ahead. I am very grateful and excited to be taking up the position of Head of School and would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Oakhill community and the staff for the kindness and support they have shown me.

It was with great excitement that we welcomed 83 new children to the Oakhill family on Wednesday. We wish these children and families everything of the best as they experience *The Joy of Learning* at Oakhill and become part of this very special community.

As we started the year, the wonderful energy and excitement of the children was accompanied by broad smiles (perhaps of relief) from the parents as the children met their teachers and mentors and started the academic year. We have quickly found our rhythm and can look forward to a busy and exciting week ahead where the upcoming Inter House sports events will add even more energy and excitement as house spirit and friendly rivalry will be the order of the day.

We were delighted to also welcome a number of new teaching staff to Oakhill. In the College we welcome Mr David Wright (Head of College), Mrs Jessie Wright (English), Ms Natalie Thyse (Afrikaans), Mr Travers Pellew (Geography), Mrs Melissa Bennetts (Life Sciences and Mathematical Literacy) and Ms Zine Daki (isiXhosa).

In the Preparatory School we have Mrs Kelly Pellew (Oakhill Support Team), Ms Zine Daki (isiXhosa), Mrs Bruton (Grade R), Mr Scott Armstrong (IP Intern) and Ms Jessica Warnick (FP Intern) joining. We wish all the new staff well as they complement our already impressive teaching team and we look forward to working alongside them.

Our staff started the year with professional development sessions and training as we explored the theme The Ripple Effect of Joy. This theme saw us covering topics from Professional Excellence and Classroom Best Practice to Relationships as the Currency of Education. One of our training sessions, facilitated by Cloud-Ed, was entitled, Transform your Teaching and Learning with Gemini and NotebookLM. The training provided very useful and necessary insights into the use of AI for teaching and learning.

The Grade 12 class of 2025 are to be congratulated on their impressive matric results. We are immensely proud, not only of

our top achievers but also of the fact that every single candidate achieved a Bachelor's Degree pass. I would also like to congratulate the Matrics of 2025 on every challenge met, every obstacle overcome and every opportunity taken. They certainly made Oakhill proud and further enhanced our highly regarded academic reputation. Thank you and congratulations to every teacher, from Grade 000 to 12, who invested so much energy and care in educating our matrics. For more details regarding our matric results please [follow this link](#). You will also find our matric results in the local press and our media platforms.

As our school continues to grow we are mindful of the higher volumes of traffic on and around our campus and would like to ask all members of our community to assist us in managing this responsibly and safely. Please be aware of the children in the drop off and collection areas 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](#). Foundation Phase parents (Grade 1-3) are kindly requested to continue to make use of the Syringa Street parking and entrance above the school astro and playing field. In keeping with our Eco School status and our concern for the environment, parents are kindly requested to avoid running their engines when parked for long periods of time.

While we recently received some relief from the hot and dry conditions we have been experiencing, our town and region continues to experience a severe water crisis. We have and will continue to speak to our children about responsible water usage and management. We would like our children to become champions of this cause and ask for your support in further educating, guiding and setting the right example for them. Please could you also ensure that your child has a filled water bottle for the start of each school day.

I, along with the staff, look forward to interacting with our families during the many Meet and Greet or Information Evening occasions that have already started and will be rolled out over the next two weeks.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said: *"Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year."* It is my sincere hope that in the year ahead our approach and attitude will reflect that same spirit. May this year be one of personal discovery and growth, resilient community spirit, and abundant joy. To our children, I hope that you will have moments that challenge you, the courage to try new things, friendships that sustain you and may you know and share great kindness.

Best wishes

*James*

Head of School: James Cross

