



Dear Oakhill School Family

It is quite difficult to believe that we have only been back at school for two and a half weeks as our time has already been filled with many great moments and special experiences.

Our staff greatly valued the opportunity to engage with parents through the many Meet and Greet or Parent Information evenings that we have hosted. These are very meaningful sessions that provide the basis for the invaluable partnership between parents and teachers as we hold the child and look to make the most of the learning journey ahead. Thank you to our parent body for supporting these initiatives.



There was tremendous house spirit on display last week as children across the school competed for valuable house points and bragging rights. The highly competitive Inter House athletics days and the College swimming gala were noted for their great energy, good sportsmanship, impressive performances and wonderfully high levels of participation. The loyal and enthusiastic support of parents added much to these occasions and we are very grateful for this. The College Community Gathering that took place on Friday afternoon was a fitting and lovely way in which to conclude a busy week. The presence of the dedicated and hard working Supporters Club ensured that there was also good food to enjoy along with the good company.

I was challenged on many occasions by young energetic and expectant participants to declare my house allegiance. I found that when I suggested that I was neutral the most common response can best be described as decidedly unimpressed.



It is with heavy hearts and a profound sense of sadness that we have had to cancel our much loved and highly anticipated Oakhill Waterfront Chukka Festivals for 2026. Serious concerns around the water quality in the Knysna Waterfront compounded by the severe water crisis and drought have left us with little choice. Parents and schools place their trust in us to run a safe event, and we hold ourselves to high standards in this regard, and we simply cannot potentially risk the health of our participants by allowing them to compete in unsafe conditions.

While this is a harsh reminder of some of the challenges facing our town and region we remain hopeful that our circumstances will improve and as a school we commit to doing what we can to help in realising a positive future for our town. We are already looking ahead to next year's event and to what we can do to ensure that we host festivals that are bigger, better and safer. I have been encouraged and I am very grateful for the messages of support and understanding following the announcement of the cancellation of the Oakhill Waterfront Chukka Festival. The water polo community have in some cases initiated fixture and even touring opportunities so that there are opportunities for schools to still play matches and connect with other schools over the time when our festivals would have taken place. The water polo community is also already looking forward to the 2027 Oakhill Waterfront Chukka Festivals.

Recently I was addressing the issue of the water crisis during an assembly and I was so encouraged to hear from our preparatory school children of some great water saving initiatives and efforts being undertaken by our children and their families. The College has taken the initiative to place hand sanitizer and wet wipes in the bathrooms to limit the use of water for the washing of hands. There are also water usage awareness posters and information posted around campus and in bathrooms to further stress the importance of responsible water usage.

We have an Oakhill Information Evening taking place in Plett on Tuesday, 3 February 2026 and are looking forward to engaging with Plett families at the Nice Neighbour.

Today Oakhill is well represented at the IEB Principal's Feedback Meeting in Cape Town with myself, Mr Wright, Mr Hardick and Mrs Victor taking part in feedback sessions covering a range of topics including IEB Academic Feedback for 2025, Schools in a Digitally Disrupted World, Tools for Professional Growth and Kindling Curiosity in Education.

I wish you an enjoyable weekend.

*James*



Head of School: James Cross