

15 May 2020

Dear Parents

### **COVID19 – Letter No 6**

We have been moving full steam ahead with online learning in this, our second week of returning to school in Term 2. We continue to iron out niggles related to technology as we go along, and thank you for your support in this regard.

I have missed a week's communication with you following a few meetings with Senior Management and the Finance Committee of the Board to establish how we can continue to support each other going forward.

I have received a few requests from parents about how we can reduce costs and pass on some credits to our parents during these stressful times.

It has been a very challenging exercise to engage in, given the nature of how the budget has been structured and that in most instances the costs are fixed and the amounts that can be passed down to parents are very negligible.

Whilst we have made steady recovery in the growth of student numbers since the beginning of the year for which I am pleased, our numbers are not where I would like them to be, making managing our budget lines extremely tight.

### **Data Support**

To support parents with data costs, we have decided to reverse the Annual General Purpose Fee that was charged at the beginning of the year to parents. Boarding parents will be receiving a different letter in relation to costs that can be passed back to them for boarding fees.

At this stage the amount that has been identified is R1000 for Term 2. In addition to that, we will be creating access for parents to drive onto campus but to remain in their cars to download information using the schools Wi-Fi. The logistics around that process will be defined and clearly explained to parents.

ISASA is almost on the brink of securing suitable data packages with other service providers.

We will continue to observe this space with regards to how we can continue passing credits on to parents accounts as we go along. However, we certainly do want to return to a school that you recognise with its full complement of staff where possible.

## Opening of Schools

The Department of Education has identified a proposed date of the 1<sup>st</sup> of June for students to return to school. This date however remains unconfirmed coming out of a meeting with the Director General of Education this afternoon in Gauteng where we were represented by ISASA. However, Independent Schools are not bound by this date.

After careful consideration and discussion with SME and the Board, we reached a decision to continue online learning for the Senior School for the whole of Term 2.

This has been motivated by the fact that almost 47% of the Senior School component consists of boarding students who will not be able to return to school until such time that borders and airports have been re-opened.

## Primary School

The decision reached for Primary School to return is after Mid-Term on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2020 and to remain on online learning till then.

We have designed a survey for Primary school parents and guardians to seek your opinion on this return date for Primary School. This decision has been informed by received wisdom, that as we move into the colder months, the infection rate will spike. This gives us an opportunity to observe the trends so that informed decisions can be made about the best time to send our children back to school with all the safety measures having been put into place. This will ensure that nobody in our community is left feeling vulnerable in the absence of all legitimate protocols being installed, providing a measure of comfort for all stakeholders when our children return to school.

Once we move into Level 3 at the beginning of June, I am almost certain that there will be a different trend in data related to infections as more people return to the public spaces.

I do not wish to take any risks related to a rushed return to school for our children, without the proper health and safety protocol and procedures being put into place. We are in the process of developing the COVID-19 policy document for the school. This is a very detailed and legal document that has so many layers to it, and I want to have the utmost confidence as leader of this institution that all areas in terms of the Health and Safety legislation have been put into place. Our deep cleaning process of our classrooms is well underway.

We are also in the process of developing a plan that will allow drive in, drop off and pick up zones where work packs and other learning materials can be picked up for our students. This plan will be clearly articulated and communicated to you when it is completed.

PRIMARY SCHOOL

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"If it's important to the child, it's important to us."

SECONDARY SCHOOL

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Let me take this opportunity to thank you for your unstinting support during these unprecedented times. I look forward to chatting to you tomorrow if you have time to join the Zoom Meeting. Please check your email for the link, meeting ID and Password.

As always, please don't hesitate to call me if there is anything you wish to clarify.

Yours faithfully

Bruce Wells  
CEO/Headmaster

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