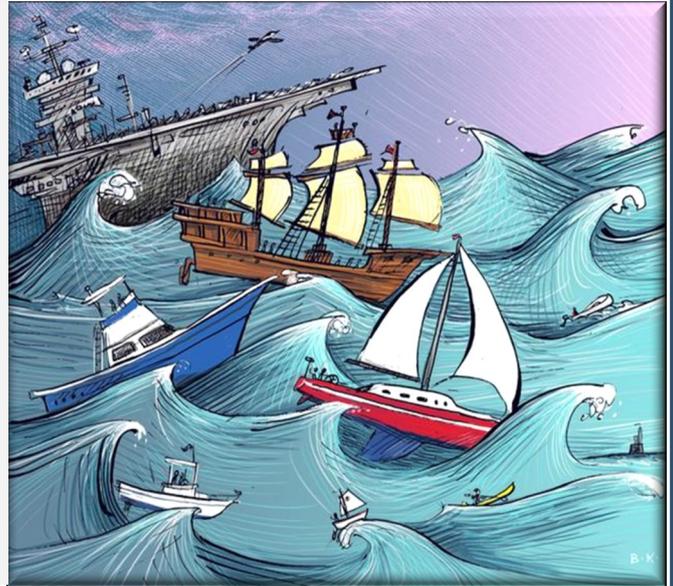


Dear Junior School Parents

The saying referenced many times during the pandemic has been "we might be in the same storm, but we are all in different boats." The intention behind this saying was to remind us all to be kind to one another and not to judge.

The same is true about the current storm we are in at DSG. No one can begin to imagine what it is like to be another person navigating through this storm. We haven't lived someone else's life and we have no right to judge the emotions, the stories, nor the experiences of another person. The emotions run deep across all stakeholders within or school.



As hard as it has been to hear the accounts of DSG alumni and current students, I commend them for their bravery and courage to speak out. Our school's vision is to empower confident yet humble women of integrity and character to serve our nation and the world. The girls that have spoken out have done so to influence change and to make the world a better place.

This is a significant moment in the history of our school, and we are all called to act decisively and with courage to do the work that will bring about real change for every student, staff member and our extended DSG family. The road ahead is not going to be smooth and there will be moments charged with anger, fear, frustration and loneliness. However, I believe that if we all truly commit to listen and learn from one another we can rebuild our school community with hope, trust and respect.

In response to the racism issues highlighted at our school this past week, I share the following with you: The Grade 7s, at school this week, met on Monday and Wednesday as part of the start of a series of 'Ubuntu Conversations' around pertinent, meaningful topics relevant to today's world. The aim of these conversations is to provide the girls with a safe space in which they can listen to and share their own unique stories, with a view to the celebration and appreciation of diversity and to grow stronger as a community.

The focus of Monday's conversation centred on the power of our names, and the girls were encouraged to share their own stories and anecdotes surrounding the meaning and selection of their names. Through group reflection, we were reminded of the importance of pronouncing a person's name correctly and of both communicating and responding to the communication of this need in a loving manner. We learned that each person has a unique story – one that we are often unaware of, and that contributes to the richness of our community.

The focus of Wednesday's conversation was the upcoming Youth Day, which we will celebrate on Tuesday, 16 June. As a group, we shared our understanding of the tragic events behind Youth Day, and then turned the spotlight to the girls' understanding of their role as the youth of South Africa today. The girls discussed the importance of the voice of the youth and reflected on the responsibility that they have in taking hands with the older generations in order to action change in our country. It was emphasised that the youth form an important part of our community and that they can play an important role in effecting change in their world.

These Ubuntu Conversations, as well as the conversations happening in and around the school, have given some of our Grade 7s the courage to step forward and share their hurt and frustrations as well as their dreams with us. Different platforms have been created for the girls to be heard and we will continue to work together to influence change within our school. The girls have requested that we think and respond differently to how we are going to address these matters, and these will be shared with you, our parents, as they are finalised.

The staff have also had an opportunity to share their stories and bring awareness to the deep hurt that rests with many of our colleagues. The staff have been on a journey together for just over two years now and they reflected on Tuesday that this was the most honest and open conversation they have had to date. It has, however, come at a time in the term when staff are weary, and this long weekend is a much needed respite to give each of our teachers the opportunity to recharge and reflect.

At the Junior School we have reaffirmed our commitment this week to transformation within our school, and we will work collectively with the Senior School to implement the plans to be introduced by the Governing Body.

In closing I share this prayer written by Bishop Arthur Malcolm for the Australian Week of Prayer for Reconciliation held in May this year.

*Lord God, bring us together as one,
reconciled with you and reconciled with each other.
You made us in your likeness,
you gave us your Son, Jesus Christ.
He has given us forgiveness from sin.
Lord God, bring us together as one,
different in culture, but given new life in Jesus Christ,
together as your body, your Church, your people.
Lord God, bring us together as one,
reconciled, healed, forgiven,
sharing you with others as you have called us to do.
In Jesus Christ, let us be together as one. Amen.*

Return to school plans

Looking ahead, the following grades will be back at school in the weeks leading up to half term. Half term will start at 12:00 on Friday, 26 June and girls will be expected at school and online on Monday, 6 July. Grade 0s and 1s, we look forward to your return to school the week of the 6 July.

Mon 15 June	Tues 16 June	Wed 17 June	Thurs 18 June	Fri 19 June
SCHOOL HOLIDAY	YOUTH DAY	Gr 6 and Gr 3 to return to school. All other grades to continue with the Distance Learning programme at home.	Gr 7 and Gr 2 to return to school. All other grades to continue with the Distance Learning programme at home.	All grades to continue with the Distance Learning programme at home.

If she believes in herself...she will fly.

Return to school plans

Mon 22 June	Tues 23 June	Wed 24 June	Thurs 25 June	Fri 26 June
Gr 6, Gr 3 and Gr 4 to return to school. All other grades to continue with the Distance Learning programme at home.	Gr 7, Gr 2 and Gr 5 to return to school. All other grades to continue with the Distance Learning programme at home.	Gr 6, Gr 3 and Gr 4 to return to school. All other grades to continue with the Distance Learning programme at home.	Gr 7, Gr 2 and Gr 5 to return to school. All other grades to continue with the Distance Learning programme at home.	All grades to continue with the Distance Learning programme at home

Screening Protocol

The daily screening protocol has continued to work well each morning and the Grade 6s and 7s have adjusted easily to these new processes. Screening is a vital procedure carried out daily to ensure the safety of the girls and staff. The protocol that we follow, as shared by the DBE, is that any person who presents with one symptom may not come to school. The symptom highlighted by our consulting medical practitioners that needs further investigation by the Sisters is fatigue and tiredness. If a child answers yes, we have to then ask, 'why are you tired?' If the child went to bed late the previous night or couldn't sleep due to stress, we then do not take it as a yes. Only if there is extreme tiredness and fatigue for no reason at all.

The symptoms we screen each morning include:

- fever
- tiredness
- cough
- shortness of breath
- body aches and pains
- redness of the eyes
- loss of taste or smell
- sore throat
- diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting

If a girl indicates any symptoms when she is screened, she is first seen by the clinic sisters to determine the nature and extent of the symptom. If it is determined that the symptom is a concern, then parents will be contacted to collect their daughter from school. If your daughter is feeling any of these symptoms in the morning rather have her work from home for the day.

What should the girls bring to school when they return

- ◆ Mask
- ◆ Device
- ◆ Packed lunch and water - Water coolers have been disabled for the duration of the pandemic.

Please refer to JS Newsletter dated 29 May2020 for more information.

Daily access to the school campus

Managing access control onto the campus is a priority for the School. In all respects the school is closed to everyone other than staff, students and contracted service providers.

Please refer to the visitor's guidelines and access rules in Newsletter dated 5 June and Visitors' Protocol posted on the D6 School Communicator.

PARENT FEEDBACK ON WELLNESS WINDOW ACTIVITIES ~ The Counselling Centre



Dear Parents

Positive self-talk formed the focus of this week's Wellness Window. We turned the spotlight onto the way the girls speak to themselves and how this can manifest in positive or negative ways. The learners were encouraged to speak kindly to themselves, to remind themselves of what they were proud of within themselves, as well as which positive or motivational statements might form part of their self-talk.

You can partner with your child in affirming and reinforcing their positive self-talk by making use of the following suggestions, adapted from Big Life Journal:

- ◆ Affirm your child with positive statements, such as, 'You are so loved', 'You are enough', or 'You matter.'
- ◆ Create an affirmation board (similar to a vision or dream board) with your child. Help her collect pictures, words, phrases and anything else that inspires her or cultivates a positive mind frame and stick them on the board. Place the board where it can be easily seen for quick inspiration.
- ◆ Use the word 'yet' if your child becomes disheartened or discouraged in reaching her goals, for example, 'Perhaps you haven't mastered that yet, but with time and practice, you will be able to!'
- ◆ Encourage your child to pick a few affirmations and practise them in front of the mirror. You can also write them on the mirror with a whiteboard marker.
- ◆ Engage in conversation with your child about what she has accomplished or learned about herself over the past period, and make conversation around what she sees in herself that she is proud of, a normal part of your conversations.

IMPORTANT: Communication with the School

Reminder: If you do not wish to have your contact details shared with your daughter's class reps for the purpose of school communication only, then please send an email to Mrs Retha Roelofse at roelofse@stmarys.pta.school.za by Friday, 12 June. On Friday, 12 June, all class reps will receive a contact list for their daughter's class and parents who are currently not included on these WhatsApp groups will be invited to join.

For further information regarding this message, please refer to email sent 4 June, to all Junior School parents .

Distance Learning Portal

Please make sure you have accessed the **NEW** timetables and weekly schedules on the Distance Learning Portal on the school website or directly via this URL:

<http://www.stmarys.pta.school.za/distancelearning>

The schedules are loaded weekly on a Friday afternoon and should be referenced in conjunction with the grade's timetable.



Kind regards


ALISON JENNINGS (MRS)
PRINCIPAL: JUNIOR SCHOOL

Communication sent this week

- ◆ Grade 7 Ubuntu Conversations

Stay connected via the School's Social Media platforms:

Facebook - <http://www.stmarys.pta.school.za/>

Instagram - @stmarysdsapta