

Dear Junior School Parents

If there is one thing I am missing in the current context we find ourselves in, it is certainty. The certainty that a carefully considered decision can be brought to fruition and the certainty that a procedure and regulation shared with schools will be the final decision and that the School can act on it with confidence. Alas, nothing is certain, and in many respects has never been something we could count on, however, the moving goal posts week on week have been unsettling and I am aware and mindful of the impact that this is having on staff, students and parents.

Grade 2s and 3s, I know you were looking forward with anticipation to your return to school this coming week and so were your teachers. Unfortunately, the domino effect of the Grade 6s not being able to return this past week, means that you will need to work online for another week before you are able to return to school. I have been hearing about your progress online and am so proud of all you have achieved while working remotely.

Grade 6s, you will return to school this coming Monday and Wednesday and Grade 7s, you will have your second week of contact teaching on Tuesday and Thursday. I commend the Grade 7 girls who returned to school this past week. It takes courage to be the first to return and to test the new protocols in place. School is different but so much is also as we remember it. It was evident from the smiles shared on Tuesday and Thursday that everyone was glad to see each other and that the girls felt a sense of freedom being able to spend time with their friends in person at break and in class.

To all the other grades still to return, everyone's return week has been moved out a week for now. We will continue to review the situation week on week and if we can get you all back on campus sooner, we most certainly will. We are proceeding with caution for now and thank you for your support and understanding as we slowly re-introduce your daughters back to school.

Update on daily procedures

- ◆ The daily screening process has worked, and no changes will be implemented for the coming week. Please see last week's newsletter for a reminder of these procedures.
- ◆ The IT Department will be onsite every day this coming week to ensure that the girls and teachers can access the required technology for each lesson to be effective. If your daughter will be using a school iPad when at school, please allow an extra 15 minutes before collecting her at the end of the day, as she needs time to return the device to the IT Department.
- ◆ Sending your daughter to school with her own device is very advantageous because we have been able to ensure that girls have run the latest updates and have been able to troubleshoot technical issues for the girls.
- ◆ We initially shared that the girls must please bring a picnic blanket to school to sit on at break. We have now been advised that this can be a potential risk for the transmission of the virus. The decision has, therefore, been taken that we will use other means, like hoola hoops, to ensure social distancing is maintained at break time.
- ◆ Thank you to our Grade 7 parents who collected their girls punctually after school this past week. It assisted us greatly.

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

What should the Grade 6s and 7s bring to school when they return

- ◆ Please refer to last week's JS Newsletter (29 May2020)

School Uniform

- ◆ Please refer to last week's JS Newsletter (29 May 2020)

Daily access to the school campus during the pandemic

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.

Any member of the public that is not employed or enrolled at St Mary's DSG Pretoria qualifies as a visitor. Family members of staff members and students are also viewed as visitors. For the safety of every student and staff member accessing the campus, parents are please to adhere to the following guidelines:

- ◆ Parents are not to exit their cars when collecting or fetching their daughters.
- ◆ All parent-teacher meetings will be conducted online for the immediate future.
- ◆ Parents wishing to access the school shop or second-hand shop must do so by appointment.
- ◆ Everyone going to the school shops, attending a meeting at school or signing their daughters back into boarding must follow the screening protocols.

Please read the **Visitor's Protocol** posted on the D6 Communicator to familiarise yourself with the guidelines in place.

Lunch boxes

Please make sure that all containers and bags are cleaned thoroughly every day. Please can parents ensure that the girls come to school with enough food and water for the school day. **WATER COOLERS HAVE BEEN DISABLED FOR THE DURATION OF THE PANDEMIC.**

Tuck Shop orders:

Cut off times for lunch orders from the Tuck Shop are as follows: 08h00 for 10h00 break and 10h00 for 12h00 lunch .

The pre order menu has been posted on the D6 Communicator under 'Resources' 'Junior School' . Orders must be sent to the Tuck Shop email address — tuckshop@stmarys.pta.school.za .

Please note:

- ◆ No orders will be processed if there are not sufficient funds in the child's Tuck Shop account.
- ◆ No money may be brought to school to pay for Tuck Shop food.
- ◆ Girls may not visit the Tuck Shop.
- ◆ The ladies in the school office will not be able to assist with ordering of food.

Certificate of attendance for all pupils to return to school (Travel permit)

Please click on the link for the certificate which each pupil must have on her return to school.

[Travel to school permit](#)

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.



Celebrating our girls' work:

The Voice – Junior School podcast series ~ Mrs Hildegard Joseph

At the beginning of May, as we were planning to return to school for term 2, there was a lot of debate and discussion about the decision by government to start phasing children back into the school system. The discussion dominated all media platforms for weeks on end as experts, government officials and parents all raised their concerns and anxieties around the proposed plans. However, there was a deafening silence; the voices of our children were not heard.

The content we share on the school's social media platforms is driven by teachers and parents, but our Junior School girls are not allowed to have their own social media accounts so they don't have a platform to raise their opinions.

This sparked the idea in me to create a podcast series for the Junior School. The podcast series is a platform for the girls to connect during lockdown. It is a forum where they can share and discuss their experiences, thoughts and opinions about all the changes they experience. I would love to know how our girls feel about returning to school and why; and if they feel they can contract the virus or not. How do the girls experience online teaching and having to spend holidays at home?

Girls from Grade 5 to Grade 7 will produce the podcasts with me. We have weekly meetings where they discuss themes and concepts for the podcasts. The girls then prepare their contribution, record their sound clips and I do the final editing before we release the podcasts.

Our first podcast was released on Microsoft Teams on Monday, 1 June, and was warmly received by our girls and teachers. It was also shared on the St Mary's DSG Facebook page. Our second podcast: To return or not to return, will be released on Friday, 5 June. We will release one podcast per week, rotating between the Grade 5s, 6s and 7s.

I have been impressed with the professional manner in which the girls have taken on this project. The podcast series is a project over and above the girls' academic work, and I appreciate that they have attended meetings and met their deadlines to ensure the podcasts are a success. The following girls contributed to the first podcast:

Gemma Barnett, Ampomah Frimpong, Lisa Boer, Naledi Monyela, Uviwe Bubu, Enelo Masondo, Nkateko Masondo, Kaelo Mokgwetsi, Renee Oloo, Letago Phalane.

I want to extend a heartfelt thanks to all the Grade 7s, Grade 6s and Grade 5s who will be contributing to the podcast series. Girls, I am looking forward to hearing your voices in the weeks and months to come.

Tips for Parents to help their kids with going back to school:
Please click on link: [Tip for Back to School](#)

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 .

Celebrating our girls' work:
Grade 3 - Banana Bread Task
Please click on link for Tshegofatso's video
[Tshegofatso's banana loaf exercise](#)



Communication sent this week

- ◇ Personnel changes in Finance Department D6
- ◇ Gr 2 and 3 Return to school letter on D6 4 June
- ◇ Gr 6 and 7 Return to school letter on D6 4 June
- ◇ Communication with school email sent 4 June
- ◇ Visitors' Protocol on D6 5 June
- ◇ Tuck Shop Pre-order Menu on D6 5 June



PARENT FEEDBACK ON WELLNESS WINDOW ACTIVITIES ~ The Counselling Centre

Dear Parents

In this week's Wellness Window, we explored the importance of kindness and discussed how kindness can mean various things to different people, and at different times. We have asked the girls to think about what being kind means to them, how they can show kindness to those around them and how they would advise others on showing kindness in the world.

There are many benefits to kindness, both for the person who receives kindness and for the person who offers kindness. Kindness assists individuals in being happier, healthier and more relaxed. This is because of the chemicals released when we witness or experience acts of kindness namely:

- ◇ **Serotonin** which increases happiness and assists with appetite, sleep and memory
- ◇ **Endorphins** which trigger positive feelings and are natural pain killers
- ◇ **Oxytocin** which reduces blood pressure and produces a feeling of love and satisfaction

One way to raise kind children is to explain the 'science' of kindness to them as we did above. We also found 5 steps to raising kind and caring children shared by "The Big Life Journal" that are helpful to consider:

- 1 Start by practicing empathy
 - ◇ Model empathy in the way you speak for example saying something like: "I know it is disappointing to leave when you are still having fun."
 - ◇ Help your children consider the emotions of others through conversations and questions such as: "What do you think she is upset about?"
- 2 Read books that teach kindness
 - ◇ When reading books that include themes such as caring, kindness and empathy, discuss the message of the story and how it can be applied in real life.
 - ◇ Ask questions like: "Do we know anyone that might need a boost of kindness right now?"
- 3 Making a difference at home
 - ◇ Allocating children small tasks at home is a way of letting them contribute to the family.
 - ◇ Emphasise and model courtesy and social skills for example saying 'please' or 'thank you' and recognising when others might be having a tough day.
- 4 Making a difference in the community
 - ◇ Once mastering 'making a difference at home' you can search for opportunities to do the same in the community. You could for example encourage your children to become involved in a project at church, donate toys or goods to a worthy cause or do some random acts of kindness around the neighbourhood.
- 5 Making a difference globally
 - ◇ Facilitate or discuss activities that can have an impact on a global scale for example: being aware of initiatives to support parts of the world affected by natural disasters or by committing to improve the environment by picking up trash while going for a walk.

Kind regards


ALISON JENNINGS (MRS)
PRINCIPAL: JUNIOR SCHOOL

Stay connected via the School's Social Media platforms:

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

Instagram - @stmarysdsdpta