



Message from the Head of School

Dear Parents

Covid-19 Update

Today I make a plea to all members of our community to please assist the School in minimising our risk in contracting this virus. Please speak to your daughter about the importance of following the safety protocols and remind her that we all have the responsibility to protect the collective. This includes the decision to accept party invites. Please do not expose your daughter to unnecessary risk by accepting party invites – especially as we move closer to the examinations. Our matrics in the boarding house are of particular concern to us at this time as they need to remain healthy for the upcoming finals. Anxiety and stress are known to weaken our immune system and the School is doing all that it can to protect the girls and staff and asks that parents and girls please support the measures put in place.

Return to school

Both the Senior and Junior schools are able to accommodate all students back at school now, whilst still maintaining physical distancing measures. All students are requested to return to school full time to benefit from contact teaching again and to establish a healthy school routine. Only a few weeks remain before the November examinations commence and it is important that the girls make the most of these final academic weeks to conclude the curriculum and prepare for the final assessments. Girls wishing to continue with online learning need to receive permission from Mrs Jennings or Mrs van der Merwe respectively.

Code of conduct

A reminder to all students and parents to please follow the school's code of conduct. Consequences will be put in place for girls who do not adhere to the school rules.

- ◇ In consultation with students and staff, the following decision has been taken as we work to review and refine the hair rules at our school: no bright colours will be allowed going forward – only natural coloured hair will be permitted.
- ◇ A reminder to all students that you are only allowed to wear one pair of earrings (one earring in each ear lobe). No nose, tongue or additional earrings in the ear are permitted.
- ◇ With regards to other jewellery – no rings or bracelets – only a gold or silver chain with a religious symbol is allowed.
- ◇ A further reminder to all students that hoodies and hats are not allowed to be worn at school. The only exception is the official school sunhat which should be worn at break and after school at sport.

The School is dealing with a number of disciplinary cases involving students that have used social media inappropriately. I remind our community that the age restriction for WhatsApp and many other social media platforms is 16. Choosing to give your daughter a phone with access to these apps, if she is in Grade 10 or younger is, therefore, in contravention of this age restriction. Much of the content created by the girls does not align with our school values and this will be addressed. Parents, please assist the school by monitoring your daughter's online activity and guiding her use of social media. We have a collective responsibility to educate and protect our daughters from the potential dangers of social media.

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



Nominations for the Governing Body 2021

Please note that the nomination form for the vacancies on the Governing Body has been placed on the communicator. The form should be returned to the school by Friday 16 October, and the Governing Body Electoral meeting will take place on Tuesday 17 November.

Best wishes

Alison Jennings

Acting Head of School

Senior School

QUILLPAD

As our matrics get ready to write their exams, we would like to share over the next few weeks a selection of their last formal pieces of writing at school.



THE UGLY PINK CARDIGAN by Mikateko Mathebula

The cardigan could have been a colour that suits my skin tone, you know, something in white or light brown. The pink makes the cardigan even uglier. It's the most precious garment I own. Koko made it for me during her last years, when I was about 15 years old. I hated it at first - the same way I hated the matching socks and beanie she made for me when I was 12. For my birthdays, she never bought me gadgets like the ones she bought for Amu and Onkgopotse; she would always knit me clothes twice my size.

'Kind', 'sweet', 'rude', 'old' and 'annoying' - in this order - were the adjectives I used to describe her. We never really saw eye to eye because she made it so obvious that I was her least favourite. Every time her other grandkids would head out to play, she would ask me to stay behind and massage her or help her unbraid or help her bake or knit or ... She never let me out of her sight. I hated visiting her - the same way she hated having me over. We were not friends.

"I love you, Mikateko, thank you," were the words she said at least twice a day during her last healthy year. These words were what repaired our relationship, these were the words that made me replace the adjectives I used to use to describe her with words such as 'smart', 'beautiful' and 'loving'. Koko was never one to disclose how she felt so when she did, we knew something was wrong. Koko was dying.

"How are you still knitting at 90, Koko?" I would ask with so much pride in my voice. "I know how much you love the things I knit for you, so I have to make you more!" Koko said, with the sweetest voice that was nothing like the one I used to hear when I didn't do the dishes as she had asked. My grandma never shut down my dream of wanting to become a fashion designer, unlike my parents. She always took me with her to help her shop for new material - until she decided to stop taking me. I thought she also didn't believe in me, but she only did what my parents asked, for the sake of the family.

"Happy Birthday, Koko Banny!" I screamed for the last time as I gave her the final present. It was a pair of knitting needles and different coloured wools for the cardigans she was going to make for me. The cardigans were the only way Koko could keep me motivated to become a fashion designer. I wish I had seen her efforts earlier, I wish I had more time to thank her for all the cardigans, and I wish I had more time to wear them around her, now that I understand why she made them only for me.

The ugly cardigans became pretty cardigans at the exact moment that she passed on, silently on her favourite couch, halfway through making my last cardigan, using the new needles and wool I had bought for her. I wear a cardigan every day, regardless of the weather, for they make me feel closer to her. The ugly pink cardigan is the prettiest one I own now.

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GREEN IS THE WARMEST COLOUR by Quinnlyn van der Merwe

When my mother noticed I had started planting all the seeds I came across, she asked me why. To her, it seemed rather inconsequential and perhaps strange to consider each seed, each pip, and then inevitably plant it. I had collected succulents before: beautiful, plump leaves and adorable spiky little thorns. They flourished under my care, so of course the next step would be to grow new plants from the seeds.

For every fruit and vegetable I consumed, I harvested the seed, the pip, the root, and lovingly buried them under a blanket of warm, moist soil. Even though my mother didn't fully understand, she drove me to the petrol station to pick up the bag of soil that sparked my desire to plant a garden that overflowed with flowers that push through the earth with brilliant colour, fruit that bursts with flavour, vegetables that nourish and feed to fill you.

Eventually she came around to the idea of a garden, seeing the benefit of growing everything ourselves, and she became extremely invested in helping me cultivate a new hobby and, in the process, the beginning of a sustainable source of food and joy. A trip to the plant store solidified this when my mother bought a large, stacked planter for herbs and vegetables, along with an array of herbs, succulents, and a few more bags of soil. Perhaps more than a few. Perhaps many. Perhaps my car's entire boot floor was covered by the large sacks of soil.

Lining the planters with plastic to protect the wood from rotting was far more tricky than anticipated, and that night both my mother and I laughed at the way our backs ached from bending over the planter to pour the soil as precisely as we could. One would have thought that we were ancient, wrinkly grandmothers by the way we complained.

It was all worth it, however, to see my herbs and succulents flourish in a matter of days, growing strong and bright. The incredible spike of dopamine in my brain after that only cemented the notion that this was something I had to do. I had to plant. I had to grow things.

It made me realise that I had more in common with my own grandfather than I had previously believed. He turned a large section of his land at the Vaal River into a greenhouse of sorts. Fruit trees, vegetable plants, herbs, grapevines, roses and succulents overwhelm the grounds. It's like a slice of heaven in Parys. He even gave me a strawberry plant on the brink of bearing fruit. A trip to Checkers for groceries resulted in fourteen Little Garden starter kits. At this point I have so many kinds of plants – from rosemary to potatoes, desert roses to pak choi, tomatoes to marigolds – that I have no more room for them all. I so badly want to build a greenhouse to house my many plants. Thank goodness YouTube exists – there are so many DIY tutorials that they come out of my ears!

Growing things brings me a sense of calm and peace that is difficult to explain. Watching plants bloom and bear fruit lets pride and satisfaction blossom in my chest along with the very things I watch grow. It reminds me of basking in sunlight, toes wiggling into the earth, grass tickling my face as I lie on my back, illuminated by the sun. Green is often said to be a cool colour, but how can *that* be when so much green flourishes in the heat. Perhaps green is the warmest colour.



WISHING OUR MATRICS

All the best

FOR THE UPCOMING EXAMS

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

JuniorSchool

Junior School Academics;

All girls in Grade 0-7 have returned to school and online teaching is only offered to students with comorbidities and who have the necessary permission from Mrs van der Merwe. Girls who are not at school will be marked absent and will be given the opportunity to catch up work they have missed on their return to school.

Reminders:

- ◇ **Lunch:** Please remember to pack extra lunch as cooked lunch will not be available. **No Junior School girls are allowed to visit the Tuckshop. Orders from the Tuckshop can be placed for lunch or an afternoon snack at Aftercare.** (Order form for the Tuckshop is available on the Communicator).
- ◇ **Hats:** Spring has sprung and with the hotter weather the girls need to wear their hats when they are outside during break or at PE lessons. Hats must be clearly marked and your daughter must keep it in her bag when she is not wearing it.
- ◇ **Cellphones:** No cellphones are allowed in Junior School for all grades.

Grade 5- 7 Exams: Junior School Proposed November Exam Timetable

| Exam Timetable | Time | Grade 5 | Grade 6 | Grade 7 |
|----------------|---------------|---------|---------|-----------|
| Wed 4 Nov | 10:30 – 12:00 | | FAL | |
| Thurs 5 Nov | 10:30 – 12:00 | | | English |
| Fri 6 Nov | 10:30 – 12:00 | FAL | | NS |
| Mon 9 Nov | 10:30 – 12:00 | | English | |
| Tues 10 Nov | 10:30 – 12:00 | English | | Maths |
| Wed 11 Nov | 10:30 – 12:00 | | Maths | Geography |
| Thurs 12 Nov | 10:30 – 12:00 | Maths | | History |
| Fri 13 Nov | 10:30 – 12:00 | | NS | FAL |

Girls in Grade 5-7 will receive their **study lists** for the exams on **Thursday, 15 October**.

Junior School Sport Sessions

Non-compulsory sport sessions for Junior School girls started on Monday, 21 September. These sessions focus on getting active again and Covid-19 regulations are adhered to at all times. Please see below the arrangements for afternoon sports.

Please note the following:

- These are not sport specific sessions.
- No equipment may be used for these sessions.
- These sessions take place at the Athletics track.
- Girls doing sports in the afternoon must come to school wearing their sport uniform.
- All girls are fetched from and returned to aftercare.
- All girls must bring their hats and water bottles.

| Monday and Wednesday | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Grade 0 and 1 | 13:45 – 14:30 |
| Grade 4 and 6 | 14:30 – 15:15 |
| Tuesday and Thursday | |
| Grade 2 and 3 | 13:45 – 14:30 |
| Grade 5 and 7 | 14:30 – 15:15 |

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Junior School Morning Drop Off traffic

We thank parents for their patience in the mornings when dropping off the girls. We understand that traffic in the Junior School parking lot is currently challenging and we are constantly looking at solutions to alleviate the problem.

From Monday, 12 October, **Grade 7** girls must please be dropped off at the Diocesan Hall for screening with the Senior School. **ALL Grade 0-6 girls** must be screened at the Junior School. There are no staff to screen Grade 0-6 at the Diocesan Hall.

Junior School Covid-19 Protocol

As we approach the October midterm, we would like to appeal to parents to remain conscientious and diligent in terms of the recommended Covid-19 protocols. Please remind your daughters to:

Wear a mask at all times & Wash/Sanitise your hands often & Practise social distancing

One of the most dangerous factors regarding the Covid-19 virus is that infected people are often asymptomatic. That means that you or your friends could be infected but may not be feeling sick at all. For this reason it is best practice to assume that you and every person you come into contact with - at school and elsewhere - is potentially positive.

We all have a duty and responsibility to protect ourselves, our friends and family.

Parent Feedback on Junior School Wellness Window Activities ~ The Counselling Centre

Dear Parents,

With the return of our girls across the grades to face-to-face learning, we are continuing to explore and discuss the themes we shared last week. This week we wanted to share some tips with you from BigLifeJournal.com on building self-esteem.

Half-term:

Thursday, 15 October:

School closes at 11h00 for Gr 0-3 girls and at 11h30 for Gr 4-7 girls.

Aftercare will be available until 17h30.

Tuesday, 20 October:

Girls return to school after half-term.

5 ways to build lasting **SELF-ESTEEM** in kids

BY BIG LIFE JOURNAL

- 1 Give choices and responsibilities**
Offer choices (e.g., what shirt to wear). Give age-appropriate responsibilities (e.g., setting the table, folding clothes, feeding the dog, making the bed). At first, spend time demonstrating the chore and helping your child learn how to complete the task successfully. Then allow your child to do the chore independently, even if it isn't perfect every time.
- 2 Praise sincerely**
If kids grow up hearing that they're the best at everything, they may never push themselves to continue improving. Real, lasting confidence comes from trying, failing, and making hard-earned progress. Be sincere and specific with your praise. Instead of, "You're the best artist in the world!" say something like, "You're getting so good at coloring in the lines!" or, "This is a beautiful flower."
- 3 Use failure as an opportunity**
Let your kids challenge themselves, make mistakes, and occasionally fail. Then make it clear that you still love them just the same. Encourage them to try again. Trying again after failing, and improving through hard work and practice, can help your child's confidence soar.
- 4 Avoid harsh criticism and sarcasm**
Avoid giving criticism in front of others and while angry. Harsh messages aren't motivating for kids; they're damaging. Over time, they can cause children to have a negative view of themselves. Criticize thoughtfully and gently. Explain to your kids that although you sometimes dislike their actions, you never dislike *them*.
- 5 Create opportunities for success**
Teach your kids to successfully do things for themselves from a young age. Focus on their strengths. Notice what they enjoy and do well, and give them opportunities to nurture these abilities.

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2020 TERM 3 CALENDAR—Important Dates

Whole School

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 12 October | PA Committee Meeting (18h00) |
| 15 October | School closes for half-term |
| 16 October | Closing date for GB nominations |
| 16-19 October | School is closed for half-term |
| 20 October | Girls return to school after half-term |
| 21 October | Interim Transformation and Diversity Sub-Committee meeting (17h00) |
| 27 November | Final Assemblies |

Junior School

| | |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| 06-13 November | Grade 5-7 Exams |
| 13 November | Grade 0 Concert (18h00) |
| 19 November | Grade 7 Leavers function (17h00) |
| 25 & 26 November | Prizegivings |

Senior School

| | |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| 13 October | Grade 11 Parent Meeting (17h00) |
| 29 October | Grade 10 & 11 Exams start |
| 05 November | Grade 8 & 9 Exams start |

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Senior School

Pastoral Matters

Grade 8 – Mrs B Fineberg
bfineberg@stmarys.pta.school.za

Grade 9 – Mrs A van den Berg
avandenberg@stmarys.pta.school.za

Grade 10 – Miss A Watson
awatson@stmarys.pta.school.za

Grade 11 – Mrs S Stone
sstone@stmarys.pta.school.za

Grade 12 – Miss J Brown
jbrown@stmarys.pta.school.za

Academic Matters

Vice-principal of Academics
Mrs J Miller
jmiller@stmarys.pta.school.za

Junior School

Pastoral Matters

Class or Form Teacher

Academic Matters

Intersen Phase (Grade 4-7)

Deputy of Academics
Mrs L Whitelaw

lwhitelaw@stmarys.pta.school.za

Academic Matters

Foundation Phase (Grade 0-3)

Acting Head of Foundation Phase

Mrs F Pienaar
fpienaar@stmarys.pta.school.za

Boarding

Director of Boarding

Mrs P Dlungwana
pmbandlwa@stmarys.pta.school.za

Operational Matters—Boarding Office

Mrs A Lotter
alotter@stmarys.pta.school.za

Mrs C Victor
cvictor@stmarys.pta.school.za

Pastoral Matters—Senior House Mother

Mrs P Pinker
ppinker@stmarys.pta.school.za

11 October INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD

2021 CALENDAR

Please be advised that the half term dates for the Trinity Term (Term 2) are still to be confirmed.

| Term 1 (53 days) | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Start | Wednesday 13 January | |
| Close | Wednesday 31 March | |
| Half Term | CLOSE | Thursday 25 February (12h00) |
| | RETURN | Tuesday 2 March |
| Public Holidays | Sunday 21 March (Human Rights Day) | |
| | Monday 22 March (Public Holiday) | |
| Term 2 (68 days) | | |
| Start | Wednesday 28 April | |
| Close | Friday 6 August | |
| Half Term | CLOSE | Friday 11 June (normal time) |
| | RETURN | Monday 21 June |
| Term 3 (62 days) | | |
| Start | Tuesday 7 September | |
| Close | Wednesday 1 December | |
| Half Term | CLOSE | Thursday 21 October (12h00) |
| | RETURN | Tuesday 26 October |
| Public Holidays | Friday 24 September (Heritage Day) | |

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