



## Message from the Head of School

Dear Parents

I trust you are well and enjoyed a restful midterm break with your daughters. The matric exams got off to a good start last Wednesday and we continue to wish the matrics well as they study and write for the next month. In just under a week our Grade 10 and 11 students will begin their finals exams of the year and in November the rest of the School, including Grade 5, 6 and 7, will be putting pen to paper in their final exams. We pray for a peace that passes all understanding and a confidence in their own skills and abilities to complete these assessments to the best of their ability. Girls, you have worked hard throughout the year and you are well-prepared for the task that lies ahead. Be diligent in your efforts and give of your best.

### **Interim Transformation Sub-committee**

On Wednesday, 21 October, the newly appointed Interim Transformation Sub-committee met for the inaugural meeting. It was wonderful to meet all the members and it was evident, after hearing brief introductions from each member, that the shared motive of this committee is a deep commitment to nurture a truly inclusive St Mary's DSG for all. The tone of the meeting was solution-focused and forward-thinking and I believe all members left hopeful and eager to begin the work that needs to be achieved. On behalf of the school community, I extend my gratitude to each person for raising his/her hand and stepping up to assist the School on this journey.

At this first meeting we reviewed the events and actions of the past year that have brought us to the point we are at in our school's 141 year old history. The members also reflected on the current vision, mission and values of the School, as published on the school's website, and agreed that we want to continue to empower confident yet humble women of integrity and character to serve our nation and the world and ensure that they experience St Mary's DSG as a home of beauty, safety and vibrancy for all. The Christian faith and values that St Mary's DSG has been founded on, will continue to be the cornerstone of all future decisions and actions as we shape a stronger St Mary's DSG for all.

This committee is a sub-committee of the Governing Body and fulfils an advisory and support function to the Governing Body and the School to ensure that we continue to make progress on this transformation journey. The members represent different stakeholder groups and will be required to advance all recommendations in support of a unified, cohesive and nurturing environment at DSG. They will also promote practices, procedures and symbols that will advance transformation and diversity objectives and ensure that our school is an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students, parents and staff. Lastly, they will hold a restorative and reconciliatory function with the purpose to promote healing and hope.

An important discussion point raised at the meeting was the importance of more regular feedback to the community on the progress the School is making. The committee made the decision to include an insert in the weekly newsletters and we invite you to keep an eye open for these updates from next week.

The first task this committee will undertake is the review of policies. These include, amongst others, the newly drafted Anti-discrimination policy, the Grievance policy and the Social Media policy. A question was raised regarding the progress the School was making with the HR policies and these are being reviewed by the Policy and Remuneration sub-committees of the Governing Body and will be shared with the Interim Transformation Sub-committee when they are ready for review.

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



In addition to the policies, the review of the code of conduct for students will also be prioritised. The School was waiting for the outcome from part 2 of the independent investigation into racism, xenophobia and homophobia before proceeding with this task as Adv Baloyi's recommendations will offer great insight into the shortcomings that need to be addressed. The School has received an update this week stating that the final report will only be received towards the end of November. We might, therefore, need to begin this process in November and make final changes when the report is received so that we have a complete and relevant code of conduct to start the 2021 school year.

This committee will meet fortnightly and the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 4 November, at 17:00. We wish this committee well and look forward to all that will be achieved in the year ahead.

Best wishes

*Alison Jennings*

Acting Head of School

## Senior School

### Racial Literacy Training

A reminder to our Grade 10 and 8 students of the upcoming Racial Literacy Training workshops facilitated by Ms Lovelyn Nwadeyi.

- ◇ **Grade 10:** Monday, 26 October from 08:00 to 15:30
- ◇ **Grade 8:** Wednesday, 28 October from 08:00 to 15:30.

Please can all students bring their laptops and a notebook to the training.

### Grade 10 Restorative Justice mediated sessions

Grade 10 parents, you received a letter last week informing you of an opportunity for your daughters, to be facilitated by the Restorative Justice Centre. The girls have requested that these sessions please be postponed to the last week of the term so that they can focus on their upcoming exam preparations. These sessions will now take place on the **25 and 26 November**. Further details will be shared closer to the time.

### Academics

- ◇ Wednesday 28 October – Study leave for Grade 11
- ◇ Thursday 29 October Grade 10 and 11 examinations start.

The following subjects are scheduled for the first week

Date	Grade 10	Grade 11
Thursday, 29 October	Business Studies	Physical Science I
Friday, 30 October	Life Orientation	Visual Art
Saturday, 31 October		AP English

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

### QUILLPAD

Matric formal pieces of writing written before the exams.



#### From Naledi Modise:

Literature speaks very fondly of the hero's journey, which narrates the tale of a commoner answering an ill-fitting call to adventure, embarking on challenges and temptation as they transform into a stronger version of themselves, and returning with the gift of resolution to tie the story altogether. Or perhaps 'myth' is a better word to use, because my birth into the education system was immensely unremarkable. I attended a regular public school, where the tables are tattooed with adolescent secrets and the conversations are candid and crude. Of course, I am far from a hero, but I survived the cutthroat, rowdy battlefield that only kids can occupy. However, my desperation to escape the jungle led me to the next stage of my journey.

I was probably watching a rerun of The Simpsons when my mother barrelled down the stairs and into my arms, hollering about a scholarship to the local prestigious all-girls school. That short-lived celebration signalled the ascent to my heroic transformation. Now, private school is characterised by the scent of rose and jasmine as you stroll across perfect cobblestone pathways and pristine green lawns, so not only was I baffled, but I had to admit that it was slightly more remarkable. Here I discovered my deep-seeded passion for eating all that is offered, my hidden talent for screaming my lungs out to my favourite song with friends, and an innate ability to pry out the latest gossip from the rooms of an interhouse play rehearsal. However, my humble beginnings stood as a constant reminder that I am but a shell passing through a place I might not belong, because despite me feeling so grateful for having so much, those around me have been born into so much more. So, feeling unsettled, fate decided that it was time to return to my primary school.

I had revisited that place in dreams, or rather nightmares, in which I relived the darkness of being reprimanded by large and loud teachers, with the added sprinkles of exaggeration brought to you by the human subconscious. However, now the corridors were thinner, and the ceilings were lower, the classroom walls lacked radiant colour and the hallways were missing that vibrant buzz of mean children. Attempting to describe what I once found so daunting was like recalling a song you once obsessed over or the cheeseburger option on the McDonalds Kiddies menu: you can't seem to describe what initially astonished you about it. This place, that I once found so large and unnerving, was pathetic and bite-sized. How had I so easily conquered the unconquerable? The hero is meant to return with the secrets of life, yet I don't feel like the heroic winner at the end of this story. This ending felt eerily similar to the beginning: it was unremarkable.

With the ending of yet another milestone fast approaching, I am left to conjecture whether my high school journey was one of subpar achievement and lacklustre character development. That I have been nothing other than a girl who stumbled along with no answers, entirely impressionable to her environment and who is anxious about the future. Just as it should be. Remembering that I am far from a hero helps massage the tender spots on my ankles from the old shackles of puberty and now I stand practically at the gates of my undisclosed future. I am leaving with the same desperation to escape, yet with a new cape of gratitude and unparallel optimism. With this cape, I restart the hero's journey, simultaneously chasing nothing and everything, as it should be.

#### From Jeza Nqoma:

Growing up, winter was my least favourite season. I always used to dread chilly mornings, with skies enveloped in the gloom of grey clouds and roads lined with naked trees that withered with the air's slightest breath. Yet, the hostility of winter ceased to exist within the quaint walls of my grandmother's home, especially on Thursdays. Every Thursday evening, I'd awaken to the pungent smell of blood-soaked meat and piquant pepper. A squint into the kitchen would reveal my grandma hunched over a large, silver pot, carefully balanced on the cover plate of her paraffin heater. Inside this vessel, simmered a beef stew, its rich aroma dancing through what was an otherwise lifeless room.

On those nights, dumplings and beef stew filled each plate, warming our mouths and hearts. Like the luscious smell of beef that filled our home on a weekly basis, so it felt like the comfort it brought would last a lifetime. However, not even the warmth brought by this prided recipe could protect against the hopelessness that inflicted our home, following my uncle's untimely passing.

My uncle's memory haunted our home and, most especially, my grandma. To her, he was like a son and without him, she became as blank as a clean sheet of white paper. The ritualistic bustle of Thursday

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

evenings came to a halt and during dinner, the artificial taste of microwaveable lasagna only emphasized the absence of family tradition. After a series of sombre weeks, my mother took it upon herself to recreate my grandma's celebrated recipe. She came home with fresh parsley leaves, garlic and, of course, 2 kilograms of top sirloin steak. She brought out the large, silver pot and proceeded to pour out the meat, smothering it in garlic, salt and pepper. The familiar, musty bite of pepper tickled my nose. Much to our surprise, my grandma stood up from the couch in the living room and as if lured by the smell, she sat by the pot and began to stir the spiced meat. As her quick hands moved the diced cubes of meat, a look of passion grew on her face, showing the aged rigour of a professional. For the first time in what seemed like a lifetime, the smell of pepper filled the air and bubbling sound of boiling stew resonated throughout the house.

That night, we ate dumplings and beef stew. It wasn't perfect; my mother had over-seasoned the meat and the pepper was a little too strong, but the meal had never tasted better. Beyond the flavour, the meal had given us hope, affirming our belief that our joy as a family would once again, be restored.

Since my uncle's passing, my grandmother has never quite been the same, but stroking her back and looking into her eyes, I can still smell that beef stew. The pleasure of Thursday evenings remains ingrained in my mind. Today, my grandma continues to paint cubes of beef with strokes of spices in my uncle's absence. Although he may not be with us, his legacy now lives through the smell of pepper that lingers throughout the house on Thursdays.



**Junior School**

**Academics**

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

Exam Timetable		Time	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7
Wednesday	4 Nov	10:30 – 12:00		FAL	
Thursday	5 Nov	10:30 – 12:00			English
Friday	6 Nov	10:30 – 12:00	FAL		NS
Monday	9 Nov	10:30 – 12:00		English	
Tuesday	10 Nov	10:30 – 12:00	English		Maths
Wednesday	11 Nov	10:30 – 12:00		Maths	Geography
Thursday	12 Nov	10:30 – 12:00	Maths		History
Friday	13 Nov	10:30 – 12:00		NS	FAL

**Lost Property**  
 Numerous lost property items have been collected across the Junior School during the last month. These items will be placed on display in front of the Junior School Reception office on **Monday, 26 October**. We urge parents to encourage their daughters to use the opportunity on Monday to look for their lost property. Unfortunately parents will not be allowed on the premises to look for their daughters' belongings. Girls in Foundation Phase may ask their class teachers or Mrs Roelofse in the office to help them search for their lost property. Any lost property not claimed on Monday, will be donated to the second hand school shop or to charity.

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

**Junior School Sport**

◇ **Physical Education (PE)**

From Monday, 26 October, all grades will start swimming training during PE lessons. On PE days, girls must come to school dressed in their PE kit and bring their swimming kit packed in a separate bag. Please pack a towel, black/navy swimming costume and red/DSG swimming cap. Please note that swimming caps are compulsory.

◇ **Afternoon Sport**

Non-compulsory sport sessions for Junior School girls continue. These sessions focus on getting active again. Covid-19 regulations are adhered to at all times. From Monday, 26 October, swimming training for Grade 4-7 girls will be available as per the following sport timetable.

Monday and Wednesday		
Sport training	Grade 0 and 1	13:45 – 14:30
Sport/swimming training	Grade 4 and 6	14:30 – 15:15
Tuesday and Thursday		
Sport training	Grade 2 and 3	13:45 – 14:30
Sport /swimming training	Grade 5 and 7	14:30 – 15:15

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

**The Dangers of TikTok - A TikTok Factsheet for Parents**

As a school, and more especially as parents, we have a **responsibility** to know what content our children have access to on their devices. While the school has a 'no phone' policy on campus, much time is often spent by children outside of school, **unsupervised**, on their devices. The onus thus falls on the **parent** to have knowledge of what their child has **access to, how much time is spent on a device, and what apps are used**. The assumption should be made that **a child with access to an unsupervised device** with access to an internet connection, will be able to **view content that is inappropriate and harmful**.



<b>What is it?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ TikTok (pronounced tick-tock) is a video-sharing application with approximately <b>800 million active users</b> worldwide.</li> <li>◇ In 2019, TikTok was the <b>most downloaded app</b> in the first quarter of 2019, based on Apple App Store statistics.</li> </ul>
<b>Who can use it?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ People who are <b>13 years of age or older</b> can access the full TikTok experience, although the app is accessible to younger children in a limited (less appealing) way. Anyone under the age of 18 <b>must have approval of a parent or guardian</b>, however, it is very easy for children to enter an incorrect birth date and access the full app <b>illegally</b>.</li> <li>◇ Experts recommend that children <b>below the age of 15</b> should avoid the app due to concerns around <b>privacy and mature content</b>.</li> <li>◇ On average, 40 percent of users are between the ages of <b>14 to 24</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>What is a TikTok?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ A <b>short video</b> that may take the form of a dance video, video diary, viral challenge, or DIY, to name a few.</li> <li>◇ A driving force for content creators, called <b>TikTokers</b>, is to amass as many followers as possible, who will then view and share their content.</li> </ul>

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



<p><b>What is good about TikTok?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Allows for new forms of <b>creativity</b> in the area of videography by providing a framework and tools.</li> <li>◇ It is a platform for the <b>learning</b> and sharing of knowledge.</li> <li>◇ It allows for <b>self-expression</b>.</li> <li>◇ It is a <b>free</b> app.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What is problematic about TikTok?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Users have access to a wide range of material, including inappropriate content such as that involving <b>pornography, self-harm and suicide</b>.</li> <li>◇ Such content can spark a child's curiosity and this can function to <b>'hook'</b> a child into viewing problematic content in an <b>addictive</b> manner, which children do not have the skills or maturity to navigate.</li> <li>◇ Many songs shared have <b>explicit lyrics and/or lyrics of a sexual nature</b> and are often accompanied by <b>suggestive dance moves</b>.</li> <li>◇ Inappropriate content can take some time to remove, by which time it has already been circulated (this happened with a <b>suicide that was recently livestreamed and viewed by millions</b>)</li> <li>◇ <b>Viral challenges</b> of a dangerous nature often circulate, resulting in harm to those participating and those around them</li> <li>◇ The app, like most other apps, collects data about its users, and significant doubt has been cast as to the <b>security of this information</b> and how it is used, particularly as it concerns minors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What can you do as a parent?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Get to <b>know</b> the app yourself.</li> <li>◇ Use this information to engage in an <b>open and honest</b> conversation with your child about what they have viewed, from a curious, non-judgmental perspective. <b>Do not shame</b> them or threaten them as this will cause the child to hide what they are viewing from you.</li> <li>◇ Use the app <b>with your child</b>, to understand more about her likes and dislikes, interests, and how she uses the app.</li> <li>◇ Encourage <b>open usage</b> of the app, and try to avoid use of the app unsupervised or behind closed doors.</li> <li>◇ <b>Restricted Mode</b> allows you to block mature content, but is not completely failproof.</li> <li>◇ The <b>Screentime Management</b> setting allows you to control time spent on the app.</li> <li>◇ The <b>Family Pairing</b> setting is useful to accomplish both of the above.</li> <li>◇ Change all safety settings to <b>Friends</b>.</li> <li>◇ Switch to a <b>private account</b>.</li> <li>◇ Opt out of <b>personalised data</b>.</li> <li>◇ Change the <b>'allow others to find me'</b> toggle.</li> <li>◇ You can choose to <b>share an account</b> with a child under the age of 13, to monitor what they view.</li> <li>◇ In general, <b>consider how much time your child has daily to spend on a device unsupervised, and whether you are comfortable for this to be taking place. It is your prerogative as parent to put in place boundaries and restrictions to protect your child as you see fit.</b></li> <li>◇ Ultimately, children cannot be protected from every piece of inappropriate content available to them, and the only true safety net you as a parent can give them is a <b>relationship defined by open communication</b>. In this way, you can help them if they go astray, <b>and minimise harm</b>, without the child fearing punishment as the first repercussion.</li> </ul>

### OUTREACH ~ Mrs Van Wyk

I recently was involved in a donation made to a place called Angel's Hotel. This is an aftercare facility that caters for handicapped children in Pretoria, not only after school but also when parents need a break from caring for their children.

They have a wish list that ranges from wheelchairs to simple everyday grocery items.

We would like to initiate a drive for the following items:

- ◇ Grade 0 – 3 Tin foods, coffee, tea, sugar
- ◇ Grade 4 – 5 Toilet paper and tissues
- ◇ Grade 6 – 7 Toothpaste and soap



Senior School students and Junior School students are welcome to leave donations in the box in the Junior School Reception foyer. The drive will run until 15 November 2020.

For further information regarding this wonderful organisation visit their website by clicking on the following link: <http://www.angelshotel.za.org>

Thank you for the support.



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



**2020 TERM 3 CALENDAR—Important Dates**

**Junior School**

29 October	Parent/Teacher interviews <b>(by invitation only)</b>
06-13 November	Grade 5-7 Exams
13 November	Grade 0 Concert (18h00)
19 November	Grade 7 Leavers function (17h00)
25 & 26 November	Prize givings <b>(Live-streamed)</b>
27 November	Final Assembly

**Senior School**

29 October	Grade 10 & 11 Exams start
05 November	Grade 8 & 9 Exams start
27 November	Final Assembly

**CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION**

**Senior School**

**Pastoral Matters**

Grade 8 – Mrs B Fineberg

[bfineberg@stmarys.pta.school.za](mailto:bfineberg@stmarys.pta.school.za)

Grade 9 – Mrs A van den Berg

[avandenberg@stmarys.pta.school.za](mailto:avandenberg@stmarys.pta.school.za)

Grade 10 – Miss A Watson

[awatson@stmarys.pta.school.za](mailto:awatson@stmarys.pta.school.za)

Grade 11 – Mrs S Stone

[sstone@stmarys.pta.school.za](mailto:sstone@stmarys.pta.school.za)

Grade 12 – Miss J Brown

[jbrown@stmarys.pta.school.za](mailto:jbrown@stmarys.pta.school.za)

**Academic Matters**

Vice-principal of Academics

Mrs J Miller

[jmiller@stmarys.pta.school.za](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:fpienaar@stmarys.pta.school.za)

**Boarding**

**Director of Boarding**

Mrs P Dlungwana

[pmbandlwa@stmarys.pta.school.za](mailto:pmbandlwa@stmarys.pta.school.za)

**Operational Matters—Boarding Office**

Mrs A Lotter

[alotter@stmarys.pta.school.za](mailto:alotter@stmarys.pta.school.za)

Mrs C Victor

[cvictor@stmarys.pta.school.za](mailto:cvictor@stmarys.pta.school.za)

**Pastoral Matters—Senior House Mother**

Mrs P Pinker

[ppinker@stmarys.pta.school.za](mailto:ppinker@stmarys.pta.school.za)

**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)	

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