



Letter to Parents from the CEO

26 January 2021

Dear Kyalami Schools Parents,

Commencement of Face-to-Face Teaching

We are delighted that the most recent gazette published by the Ministry of Basic Education confirms that independent schools may commence face-to-face teaching with effect from Monday 1 February. You will be receiving detailed information from our School Heads on the staggered return to school for all Grade 0 - Grade 12 learners, **starting on Monday 1 February**. We will also continue to offer the remote/online learning option for those families who wish to follow that route.

IT Systems Disruption - Apology

Parents will have seen apology messages through the ADAM school admin system and through our social media channels for the disruption that occurred to our IT communications on Monday 25 January. This was due to an unforeseen technical error that occurred while we were migrating our websites to a new hosting service provider. The reason for this move is to enable a higher level of functionality in our communications, social media presence and remote/online learning. Ultimately, this disruption represented a management failure and I take full responsibility for that. Please accept my unreserved apology for the disruption to our communications and for any inconvenience suffered by our learners, parents and staff.

Second Year of the Covid-19 Pandemic and Changing Mindsets

Though vaccines are emerging and inoculations have already commenced in several countries, reaching every corner of the world with them will remain an aspiration for all of this year. In 2021, humanity will continue to adapt to living with the virus - in ways that make the coexistence less taxing than last year. The basics will remain the same: masks, sanitisation and social distancing will still be necessary in the longer term. People will give others a wider berth in public spaces, in schools and at work, without even thinking about it. As the pandemic enters its second year, we are being challenged to adapt within the new 'normal'. We are also gradually coming to terms with the fact that things will not make an easy return to the way they were. Our worlds have changed and our mindsets will have to adjust accordingly.

Changes in Schooling and Education

On Monday 18 January, we opened our school year in remote/online mode for the majority of our learners, the exceptions being Grade 000 and Grade 00 in our two nursery schools who got back to face-to-face learning from Tuesday 19 January. So far, we have been very happy with the outcome, and we are confident that our systems and protocols are robust and effective.

- Our staff across our five campuses have worked hard to optimise our offering and our learners and parents have been hugely supportive.
- The KS (NPC) has made significant investment in IT systems, which has allowed us to provide a strong remote/online offering. Investment in IT will be ongoing as it assumes a more essential role in our learning programme delivery.
- This pandemic has required our teachers to adopt growth mindsets and to develop new skill sets. Staff development programmes in pedagogy, online assessment, and new forms of care for our learners will remain the new norm

- Heads and Management Teams have been challenged by the unpredictable and non-linear behaviour of this virus. They have worked hard and shown high levels of technical ingenuity to provide safe school environments.
- Our new physical layout and spatial configuration is likely to remain the benchmark for many years to come. This will also inform our physical development plans, where the value of large and flexible spaces has been highlighted.
- Our timetabling/scheduling in the current year will make provision for face-to-face teaching, online teaching and remote learning. We will have both synchronous (where every child attends a lesson at the same time) and asynchronous (a child may access learning materials in their own time) models of programme delivery. This will require blended learning models and new models of staff deployment. Investment in our people will be more important than ever.
- We must expect there to be outbreaks of the coronavirus within our community on an ongoing basis, and we will be challenged to manage safely and effectively throughout. Keeping our school environments safe is our primary goal and keeping our face-to-face teaching programmes safely operational for as many days as possible is our second goal. We can only achieve this with cooperation between home and school and through a shared ethos of care and concern for our mutual physical, social and mental wellbeing.

Sports and Co-Curricular

Good schools cater for the development of the whole child, exploring every aspect of the child's innate intelligences, and placing emphasis on the physical, social, emotional and psychological development of the child. This cannot be easily achieved in a remote or online learning model, if it can be achieved at all.

Our KSG philosophy is based on the holistic development of the child and we are cognisant of the fact that our parents will expect us to be proactive and innovative in relaunching our sports and co-curricular programmes too. Planning is already in place for this and we are hopeful that the Ministry of Sports, Arts and Culture will approve the resumption of school sports and other co-curricular activities soon. We will be ready to launch as soon as the approvals are published.

Here again, the format of our internal sports and co-curricular programmes will be very different to what we had previously. The nature and format of inter-school competitions will also be fundamentally altered by the requirements of Covid-19 protocols.

Reporting on Outbreaks of Covid-19 within the KSG school community

Just as we depend on our families to alert us of instances of Covid-19 infection in the home, we have the same obligation to keep our families informed of outbreaks of COVID-19 at our schools. There are two such incidents to note:

- One of our Beaulieu College staff tested positive on Friday 22 January and is currently in isolation and working from home. Eight other staff with whom that employee had contact are also in isolation and teaching/working from home. The staff member who tested positive has mild symptoms. Our staff in isolation appear to be well at this stage and they will be undergoing tests by the end of this week. We hope that they will all return negative test results and be back at the workplace by the beginning of next week, failing which they will continue to teach on the remote/online programme. We do not foresee any impact on the commencement of face-to-face teaching at Beaulieu College at this stage.
- A Grade 000 child tested positive after having attended at BeNS for two days last week. Our management staff conducted a tracing process and we are satisfied that there were no 'hard contacts' between this child and other children or staff. On that basis, face-to-face teaching and learning for the Grade 00 class concerned will continue. Mrs Hillen and Mrs Newman have already communicated on this matter to the classes concerned.

Stay safe and well, and thank you for your ongoing support. Ke a leboga, Ngiyabonga, Baie Dankie.

Yours faithfully,



Tom Hamilton
Chief Executive Officer

Directors: Dr H. Chikwanda (Chairperson), A. Delpont, A. Meerburg, A. Sheard, T. Hamilton (CEO Ex-Officio)
Co. Reg.: 1995/009710/08 - **Kyalami Schools (NPC) incorporates:**
Beaulieu Preparatory School, Kyalami Preparatory School and Beaulieu College