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Coronavirus (COVID-19)- Letter 4

Dear St George's Family



It is hard to believe that two weeks ago we closed the gates to the school for all our pupils with 62 reported Coronavirus COVID-19 cases in the country and none in the Eastern Cape. No doubt many of you are also doing your daily check on either the [WHO \(World Health Organisation\)](https://www.who.int/) site or [Worldometer](https://www.worldometer.com/), the numbers have obviously grown exponentially since that day when we closed.

There is currently so much information being shared on so many platforms as we all scroll on our phones and devices, as one does, particularly when time is on our hands. So my first share today is a short video I have used before that will hopefully give some perspective during this shutdown period called "Look up"- by Gary Turk [click here](#). We are all working remotely at this time and when term begins, so might many of our children. We really do need to set parameters on our usage of technology during this time and perhaps set

boundaries with regards to when we are in the office, classroom and when we are not.

The only thing certain right now is the uncertainty of what lies ahead and it is at times like this when our beliefs and ideals can be questioned. Again, a lesson presents itself, what a wonderful time to turn to our faith and reconnect with those beliefs and ideals that we sometimes forget about in the rush of daily life. Whilst preparing the traditional end of term slide-show for the children [click here](#), it became abundantly clear to me how our Preppies from the smallest Grade 000 to the tallest Grade 7 certainly are privileged to attend a school like ours and live in the manner they do. We live in a society with such diversity, as well as division, and perhaps now is also a time to recognise our privilege and ask what we can do when this passes? The challenges that will be presented for many South Africans, our own community included, could be far reaching, not necessarily immediately but certainly during the months that lie ahead.

This brings me to our final lesson for now, and that is gratitude. I type this letter sitting in a beautiful home, with plenty of outdoor space, family and pets together and we are relatively unscathed by all that surrounds us. I have listened to our President's national addresses with much pride and again gratitude that he is leading our nation. As a good friend of mine mentioned recently, "Cometh the hour, Cometh the man." This certainly rings so true for us all!

With the announcement of our lock-down until midnight of Thursday, April 16, this obviously changes our anticipated opening date for Term Two. It seems pointless, especially given the uncertainty, to open for one day on Friday the 17th of April, so we will open on Monday 20 April 2020. I would also like to put here that this depends on decisions taken at government level.

Thankfully, we are all part of a school community with the capacity to deal effectively with the challenges we face. 29 of our academic staff members will be completing a series of 6 hour webinar courses over the next two weeks, further skilling themselves with the challenges that online learning will bring. We are very grateful for the staff we have here at St George's Prep; they really have shown their commitment already to the children and to each other. The first two weeks of Term Two have already been prepared, and we are currently focussing on refining our online/distant learning strategies going forward. All our senior Prep pupils are already on Google Classroom and have an iPad at their disposal and the majority of them have adequate connectivity. This certainly does make decision making a little easier for us with regards to our approach. Our younger pupils from the Pre-Prep and Junior Prep, are not really capable of self-directed learning at this stage in their development, so our approach therefore needs to be different.

So what will happen next term?

- Although official learning would have begun on the 15th of April, given the new time frames we will start Term Two either in class at school or with distant learning as of **Monday 20 April**. Our Grade 1-3 learning packs will be distributed on Friday 17th of April after lockdown (if the dates remain as is) is over. We will ask our class parents and staff to communicate the details of how and when via the class WhatsApp groups and using Google forms.
- Google Classrooms will be in use again on Friday 17th of April for the pupils to familiarise themselves with the content and any messages from their teachers.
- The Pre-Prep will be sending out separate communication before the 17th of April to inform you of their approach during this time, in the event of us not physically returning to classrooms.
- The Music Department will be in communication with their pupils and a Google form will be sent out where pupils will be able to book a weekly time-slot with their teachers and be given personal tuition via Skype or Google Meet if required.
- Mrs Stamper and Mrs McNaughton will be available to assist their pupils and they will both communicate with parents as to how this will be structured online if required.
- Please keep an eye on the d6 communicator, Engage Parent Portal and your email for further correspondence.

I recently posted this on my professional [Facebook Page](#):

Please enjoy the holiday and the coming Easter weekend together and take time to adjust to these new norms we are all facing. In the interim get out there and play, read, build, teach your children new skills, how to bake, change a light bulb, clean a bedroom (I speak personally ha!), contribute to the household chores, take out the old board games, BUT most importantly have fun as these days are precious.

The entire staff of St George's wish all our families all the very best.

Stay safe and God bless!

Kind regards



Alex Hall

