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ST GEORGE'S  
PREPARATORY

9 September 2020

Dear St George's Family

After we all faced a rather chilly first day of Spring last week, things certainly did start to warm up and it made me reflect on the words of Alexander Pope's "An Essay on Man":

*"Hope springs eternal in the human breast;  
Man never Is, but always To be blest.  
The soul, uneasy, and confin'd from home,  
Rests and expatiates in a life to come."*

Spring certainly does bring hope, with the promise of warmer and lighter days. Hope is something we all need a little bit of right now as we continue to navigate our way through all that this year has brought us. As we prepare to wind down what has been yet another historic Term in the journey of our Prep School, we are mindful of the fact that we are all hopeful that "things" will start to get back to normal soon. Sadly, at this stage there are few promises of normality just yet and we continue to plan and prepare as best we can, given the context in which we find ourselves. We are very aware of the challenges our pupils and families have faced over the past six months and as such we have conscientiously focused on the mental and psychological wellness of all our pupils, first and foremost. When children are anxious or faced with change (yes, COVID-19 is the greatest change I think any of us will possibly experience in our life-time), their capacity to learn and to flourish diminishes. This too is true for adults. We are also faced with the challenge that certain assessments, online tests, etc. may not have been performed as independently as during traditional school schedules and classes. This is purely the result of the circumstances our children and families currently face. In a world where every answer is a Google or Siri away, COVID-19 certainly has re-defined what education and real teaching and learning could look like and perhaps, should look like. As the recently departed, Sir Ken Robinson wisely once wrote:

*"The fact is that given the challenges we face, education doesn't need to be reformed — it needs to be transformed. The key to this transformation is not to standardise education, but to personalise it, to build achievement on discovering the individual talents of each child, to put students in an environment where they want to learn and where they can naturally discover their true passions."*

He also wrote this:

*"When my son, James, was doing homework for school, he would have five or six windows open on his computer, Instant Messenger was flashing continuously, his cell phone was constantly ringing, and he was downloading music and watching the TV over his shoulder. I don't know if he was doing any homework, but he was running an empire as far as I could see, so I didn't really care."*

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Ironically my oldest son, also a James, was often found “running an empire” on many occasions during his schooling as does my younger son currently! I have no doubt that many of our pupils have also felt this way during this time of Google-Classrooms, email, WhatsApp, Zoom Parties, Online this and Online that etc. and the less said about TikTok, probably the better!

All the pupils from the Junior Prep and Senior Prep will be receiving a Progress Report at the end of the Term, assessing the areas we believe to have been important during these unprecedented times. The focus has obviously had to shift from traditional assessment models and we have realigned our thinking to try and gauge just how well our pupils have adapted to a new schooling environment, whilst still navigating their way through the curriculum.

Our most important process as a school is obviously teaching and learning. We believe we have managed to deliver a wonderful program of teaching and learning during the online/stay at home Term 2 and the hybrid approach of lessons at school and lessons at home during Term 3, delivering our curriculum so that no child is left behind. We are eternally grateful to all our parents who have partnered in this journey, a journey no one ever could have expected. I am also in absolute awe of our teachers who have been teaching both pupils in class and at home and the creativity and agility they have shown whilst slaying their own dragons is nothing short of pure brilliance. 2020 certainly will be a year to remember!

We will continue to have the school in Red and Blue teams next Term, attending on alternate days as the classrooms are starting to fill up and with the current Social Distancing Legislation it makes sense and leaves us with few alternatives. We strongly encourage all our pupils to return to school on their allocated days in Term 4, unless there are still concerns with regards to health or serious comorbidities. Having the children return this Term has shown us just how important human connection is for authentic learning to take place as well as the wonderful social interaction and movement the children benefit from whilst spending their day at school. We also would encourage pupils to return as it will no doubt help them transition back to school with more ease and less anxiety when we open our doors fully again.

It is our intention to return the school day back to its ‘normal’ school times as it was in Term 1 and to re-adjust our time-table accordingly. We are also wanting to re-introduce sporting and cultural activities in the afternoons and we will run our Preparatory School Aftercare for the Grade 1 to 3 pupils if the numbers make this sustainable. Please complete the new form by [clicking here](#) for further information and to complete if your child will require Aftercare next term. Unfortunately, there has not been enough interest at the Pre-Preparatory for Brainy Bugs to return at this point but Aftercare will be available by the teachers until 14:00 as per Term 1. We intend to have Kindermusik, Playball and Monkeynastics returning between 12:30 and 14:00 next Term and are in discussions with the other outside service providers. The school day will be as follows:

Pre-Preparatory	08:00-12:30 (Optional Aftercare and Extra-Curricular Activities to 14:00)
The Junior Prep (Grades 1-2)	07:45-13:00 (Sport from 13:00-14:00)
Grade 3	07:45-14:00 (Sport from 14:15-15:15)
Senior Prep (Grades 4-7)	07:45-14:00 (Sport from 14:15-15:15)

The online/at-home programme will continue until the end of Term 4. Individual music lessons will resume at school and continue online for pupils still at home and for Mrs du Plooy's pupils. Art and Drama lessons in the afternoon with Mrs Stiglingh and Mrs Maltby, are being investigated and parents will be receiving a Google form to gauge interest and suitable times. All these activities will obviously take place under the correct supervision and following COVID-19 protocol. You will receive the final time-table and Extra-Curricular Activities programme before the end of the Term. Please also note that we will be requesting that the children wear Sports Clothing on **all** days of the week next Term as many pupils will be attending sport sessions on their days of attendance. Please [click here](#) to access our updated Standard Operating Procedure for Term 4.

Friday the 18th of September was our initial break-up day and this would only be for a couple hours given our drop off times in the morning. We have decided that Thursday the 17th of September will be the last day for Term 3 for pupils and this allows us to give the staff an opportunity to attend a workshop on the Friday as part of their own professional development. **Term 3 will therefore end on Thursday, 17th September** at:

12:00 for the Pre-Prep  
12:30 for Grade 1 & 2  
13:00 for Grade 3  
13:30 for Grade 4-7

The 4th Term will commence on Tuesday, **29th September** with the Blue Group on that Tuesday.

We really are excited to see more and more Preppie faces returning to Campus as the day's progress and are hopeful that ALL our pupils will return for the start of the final Term. Again, words are not enough to thank our parents for all the sacrifices you have had to make to navigate these difficult months and we trust that perhaps some of you may be able to enjoy some quality time together as a family during this relatively short Spring break.

God bless and stay safe!

Yours sincerely

**Alex Hall - Campus Head**

Twitter- [@AlexHallZA](#)

Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/AlexHallZA>

Linkedin- [za.linkedin.com/in/alexhallza](https://za.linkedin.com/in/alexhallza)

### **Ordering from the School Shop and Second Hand Clothing Shop**

Herewith two links below for the School Shop and the Second Hand Shop in case you need to order sports kit and tracksuits for Term 4.

#### **School Shop Link**

<https://bit.ly/SGPSchoolShopOnline>

#### **School Second Hand Shop Link**

<https://bit.ly/2ndHandClothingOrderForm>

Orders placed will be delivered once a week to your child's classroom.

## **School Office Hours**

The School Office and Finance Department will be closed from Friday 20 September and will reopen on Tuesday 29 September 2020.

## **Term Date for the remainder of 2020**

Term 3 ends	Thursday 17 September <b>[please note new date]</b>
Term 4 commences	Tuesday 29 September
Term 4 ends	Friday 4 December

## **PROVISIONAL Term Dates 2021 [subject to change]**

### **Term 1**

Commences:	Monday 18 January
Ends:	Friday 26 March

Public Holidays during Term: Monday 22 March (Human Rights Day)

*Easter - during School Holidays:* Friday 2 April (Good Friday)  
Monday 5 April (Easter Monday)

### **Term 2**

Commences:	Tuesday 13 April
Ends:	Friday 25 June

Public Holidays during Term: Monday 26 April (School Holiday)  
Tuesday 27 April (Freedom Day)  
Saturday 1 May (International Workers Day)  
Wednesday 16 June (Youth Day)

### **Term 3**

Commences:	Wednesday 21 July
Ends:	Thursday 23 September

Public Holiday during Term: Monday 9 August (National Women's Day)  
*Public Holiday during Holidays:* Friday 24 September (Heritage Day)

### **Term 4**

Commences:	Tuesday 12 October
Ends:	Friday 3 December