



Jeppe High School for Boys

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Headmaster: D. J. Jackson
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11th June 2021

Dear Jeppe parents,

As we come to the end of another week, I thought it important to bring you all up to speed on developments at the school, particularly from a COVID perspective.

As is to be expected given the exponential increase in positive cases throughout South Africa and particularly in Gauteng, the school has also seen an increase in infections with 13 current confirmed positive cases amongst the boys. Thankfully there seems to be very little, if any, "within-school" transmission with the majority of positive cases appearing to originate from outside of the school as a result of a family member testing positive or due to community exposure. In speaking to medical professionals and other headmasters it appears that this is a consistent theme across the vast majority of schools.

We are, as expected, also experiencing an increasing number of learners who are isolating after having been identified as "close contacts" to positive cases (both within and outside of the school environment). Boys who are isolating are able to keep up to date with their academic lessons through over 300 Google Classrooms in operation at the school (our latest report indicates 96% of boys regularly access this online platform) and should thus not be prejudiced academically. Should parents have any queries regarding the accessing of academic work during periods of isolation, I remind you that the first point of contact, other than the subject teachers themselves, are the relevant Heads of Grade whose details I've once again included below:

GRADE	HEAD OF GRADE	CONTACT DETAILS
Grade 8	Mr Ngema	cngema@jeppeboys.co.za
Grade 9	Ms Dietrich	edietrich@jeppeboys.co.za
Grade 10	Mr De Villiers	gdevilliers@jeppeboys.co.za
Grade 11	Ms Sookdev	nsookdev@jeppeboys.co.za
Grade 12	Mr Schneider / Ms Clark	mschneider@jeppeboys.co.za / oclarck@jeppeboys.co.za

From a staff perspective, we currently only have one educator and one support staff member who are COVID positive. All other educators are back at school with no educators currently in isolation or awaiting test results.

*Turning **black** and **white** into **gold***

The reportedly imminent country-wide vaccination of the education sector is greatly welcomed and will undoubtedly assist us in continuing to keep the school operational and lessons taking place on campus.

As communicated in previous headmaster letters and last week's school newsletter, next week the school will be closed for on-campus learning on Thursday (17th) and Friday (18th) so as to give boys, staff and parents a much-needed break prior to the intensive two-week test block, and given that boys have been hard at work since 1 February (mid-January for staff) with only a one week break at the end of April. In addition to using this break from on-campus learning to prepare for the test block, complete any outstanding assessments and focus on mental and physical wellbeing, my plea is that all Jeppe families use this time away from campus responsibility so that, as was the case three weeks ago, this "natural circuit breaker" has an additional positive benefit of reducing transmissions when school returns to on-campus lessons on Monday, 21st June.

Regarding the upcoming test block (28th June - 9th July), whilst boys should make every effort to write these tests when scheduled, we are aware that a minority of boys may not be able to do so due to being COVID positive or in isolation. Should this be the case, boys will be required to write catch-up tests (and will not simply be given class or grade averages) as soon as they are healthy and able to do so. Please ensure that you communicate with the relevant Head of Grade should your son miss an test/s so that procedures can be put in place to ensure that all missed tests are written. Please also be aware that should catch-up tests be required to be written in the first week of Term 3 it may delay the issuing of reports for these boys.

I have, on various occasions, acknowledged the impact of the pandemic on the lives of Jeppe families and the significant financial, emotional and physical impact of the virus on our community. I would like to close this particular letter, however, by paying tribute to the educators at Jeppe.

Other than frontline healthcare workers (whose training, skill-set and experience are all focused towards the management of medical challenges) I believe that teachers are the unsung heroes of the COVID pandemic. Many parents, perhaps, do not realise that the vast majority of South African public schools, both primary and secondary, are still on a rotational model (in our circuit, only four schools have all grades currently back at school on a full-time basis) and that it is primarily due to the courage, work ethic, passion for education and commitment to the boys of the Jeppe staff that the school has been able to accommodate all grades on campus since the third term of last year.

It is a testament to the professionalism and dedication of the Jeppe staff (including the administrative and ground staff) that to date no staff member has applied for comorbidity leave and that we have been able to continue, relatively unaffected, with the academic and (when regulations permit) extramural programmes despite the potential personal health risk which teachers are exposed to on a daily basis through their interactions with a multitude of learners, fellow staff and the broader education community.

My sincere thanks and appreciation to all of them during these trying and complex times.

Yours in health and education.



Dale Jackson
HEADMASTER