



Jeppe High School for Boys

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Headmaster: D. J. Jackson
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6th August 2021

Dear Jeppe parents,

As we conclude our test block, and the second week of Term 3, I thought it an opportune time to update you on a number of developments at the school since our last communication.

From a COVID perspective, the third term has certainly started far more quietly than the last term ended. At the time of writing “only” four boys and two staff members are currently COVID positive, with the majority of these cases originating over the holiday period and thus posing no risk to the school community. The comprehensive vaccination of educator and non-educator staff was also a significant and positive development, referred to in our previous communication, and we are hopeful that moving forward this will continue to have a positive impact on the mental and physical health of the staff.

There were, however, unfortunately a number of parents and extended family members of both boys and staff who passed away over the holiday period and I want to extend my sincere condolences to those families who lost loved ones during this time. The trials and tribulations of re-worked timetables, cancelled sporting fixtures and amended school calendars pale in comparison with the loss of a loved one and our thoughts remain with all those so tragically affected.

Turning to academics, we look forward to returning to full academic lessons on **Tuesday, 10 August (Day 7)**, with both boys and educators armed with feedback emanating from the results of the test block - these results, we believe, will be important indicators of the academic progress and performance of the boys, and a vital component in preparing them for the run-in to year end examinations. As a result of the delayed re-opening of schools, the interruption of the test block last term and the conclusion thereof today (Friday, 6th August), Term 2 reports will be issued in the week ending Friday, 27th August.

We remain confident that all subjects will complete the syllabi in all grades by the end of year examinations but in order to cement the readiness of our matric cohort, for both preliminary and final examinations, we have arranged a number of extra lessons and support programmes that will take place in the afternoon and on weekends, for the matrics. A separate letter has been sent to matric parents in this regard. In addition, matric educators have graciously agreed to sacrifice a part of their October holiday to provide additional lessons and workshops in selected subjects for the matriculants. A detailed programme in this regard will follow later in the term.

While extended across the holiday, the examination block has undoubtedly been a worthwhile and important endeavour. We are aware, due to isolation etc. that a small number of boys will still have examinations to catch-up - this will all take place during the course of the next two weeks. My thanks, once again, to the Grade Heads and the Heads of Departments for facilitating this all, where needed.

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

Over the past weekend the government, somewhat surprisingly, published a gazette that, inter alia, allowed for the return of both contact and non-contact sports - including inter-school matches and interprovincial tournaments - with immediate effect. Whilst much excitement has emanated from this gazette, and we are particularly keen to allow the boys to experience a handful of winter rugby and hockey fixtures - particularly against our fellow public boys' schools such as KES, Parkown Boys, Pretoria Boys and Affies. It has posed a number of logistical challenges with independent schools about to embark on their holidays, September prelim examinations (for matrics) and clashes with the traditional third term sports of soccer and athletics. Mr Gittins, as Director of Sport, has met with his colleagues at the other boys' schools and details of the upcoming fixtures can be found in his letter, sent alongside this communication (**Extra Mural Letter to Parents**).

Please note that, as was the case prior to sport being suspended in Term 2, no spectators will be allowed and full COVID protocols will be required to be followed. Once again, Mr Gittins will distribute our protocols and COVID requirements in future communication so as to ensure all parents, boys and staff are familiar therewith.

Please be aware of some administrative and logistical points of relevance, namely:

- The “final” school calendar (we hope!) for 2021 has been published and, pleasingly, the October break has been retained. As such, schools will close on Friday, 1st October and re-open on Monday, 11th October. The school year will officially end on Wednesday, 15th December
- **Tuesday 10th August - Friday 27th August**; school will run according to Tuesday, Term 2 times. This is due to us removing large full-school gatherings from the weekly routine and allowing us to maximise academic time. This will mean that school will officially end (at the completion of Period 7) at 2:25PM on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Wednesday times will remain as usual.
 - **Boys must please note that they will meet in their Houses at the start of school on Tuesday, 10th August (House venues)** - details about Inter-House Hockey, as well as the upcoming fixtures and routines, will be communicated at this time.
- **Monday 30th August onwards; Cycle Test Programme**: With the commencement of the Cycle Test Programme in the week of Monday 30th August, we will revert back to the necessary academic structure adopted during the period of cycle tests. This will mean that school will officially end (at the completion of Period 7) at 2:45PM on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Wednesday times will remain as usual.

While we have been back at school for two weeks, the third term will start in earnest from Tuesday. There is much to do and much to look forward to; academically, culturally and sports-wise. We remain mindful, always, that we are still well within the storm that is the ongoing pandemic, and that we are all required to remain vigilant while being brave and proactive in facing the challenges posed in these complicated times.

Lastly, I would like to wish all the ladies within our Jeppe Community a wonderful *Women's Day* for Monday, 9th August. We greatly appreciate all the significant contributions and sacrifices which our female staff, community members, grandmothers, mothers and sisters make to the school - we simply could never be the people we are without you.

Yours in health and education,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dale Jackson', enclosed within a circular scribble.

Dale Jackson
HEADMASTER