



Newsletter 6/2021

30 March 2021

Dear Parents

### **Corona Virus Update**

#### **Social Functions**

In chatting to Claire Draper last week, she again told me how most infections come from large social gatherings held indoors. Her advice for our families was this:

Birthday parties – hold these out of doors, preferably in a public place like a garden, park or beach. This means that everybody is wearing masks, except when eating or drinking, and there is loads of ventilation and space to social distance.

Social bubbles – create these in your family, either for your children or for yourselves. This means that the families included in this bubble choose to share the responsibility of keeping safe and that everyone in the bubble understands that they are responsible for the safety of the whole. The people in the social bubble try not to see others out of the bubble socially, therefore no ‘cross pollinating’ between social bubbles can happen.

Avoid sleepovers, indoor dinner parties and large birthday parties as these are known to be spreaders.

#### **Schooling in term 2**

I think the hardest part of this present pandemic is the unpredictability. We have all been warned of the Third Wave which is likely to arrive during next term at the latest and after the Easter Weekend at the earliest. Tomorrow the management team will meet to finalise their recommendation to the Governing Body next week. During this term we have been evaluating all our processes, the way our children learn, the drop off and collection processes, the health of our staff and families, and the movement of the children, particularly on rainy days.

I want you to know that I am committed to getting our children back to school daily this year but we also need to balance the risk of new infections, of staff stress, and the possibility of having to close whole grades once we are open because we can't maintain adequate safety protocols to prevent infections spreading.

Small steps are wiser than moving too quickly. I always thought I was a risk taker.... maybe I am still but I have realized that peoples' lives and health is paramount so I feel PNPS should rather err on the safe side. Nothing is cast in stone until the Governing Body has debated our recommendations, but at the moment these are the pros and cons...

- The drop off and collection processes have been a huge plus in the new school regime. I know some aren't happy that we officially start half an hour later, but children are being dropped off from 7:45, going straight to their classrooms and starting immediately if they choose to do so. Thanks to the families who are using the time to walk or ride to school with their children – this makes a huge difference to the amount of traffic but also allows families to interact and exercise more.
- When the new venue is complete it will become the teaching venue for the grade 7 pupils instead of the hall. The hall will become the space where learning can happen, and breaks

can be taken by all grades in case of rain. We are hoping that outside extramurals will start in the afternoons and evenings in the hall from May too.

- Currently 3 classrooms are available daily because one grade stays at home. These rooms are at times used to teach subjects which would have had their own venues last year – technology, music, art and woodwork but are essential on rainy days as they then become the ‘space inbetween’ – all classrooms have to be vacated at least every hour and a half, so passages, the aftercare, and these rooms become the open spaces.
- We are thinking that Red Roots could return to 5 days in 5 from May as they have 6 staff for 60 children. This means that we can cover the whole grade even if half the staff get sick or need to isolate.
- In the other grades our staff are stretched covering 3 classes per grade. If any staff member was put into isolation or got sick, we would not have anybody except our admin or aftercare staff to cover classes. We could get away with this for a day at a time, but I am really concerned that COVID implies 10 days plus off at a time!
- Teaching staff were, until last year, getting 4 hours during every school week to plan, mark, prepare, breathe and collaborate. We have noticed a potential issue in grade 1 with them not having a moment in a week to do these things. The grade 1 pupils have 4 staff in their grade so we thought it would be easier for them to teach 5 days and still get time for the extras – the truth is that they are just working longer hours at school; sometimes from 6:30 in the morning until 5 in the evening. This is not sustainable in the long run! This doesn’t mean we will be taking a day away from grade 1 but it means that we are hesitant to put any other grades into this situation.
- The state has taken away most of the holidays this year to make up for the time lost at the beginning of the year so the April holiday is 4 days, July 10 days and there are 5 days in October. Usually, the July holiday would have been 3 weeks, with 10 days in each of the other two.
- The children are working through the curriculum so quickly. I know that some parents have concerns about the change in academic behaviour of children during this pandemic but the positive effects are really noticeable. Teachers are saying that what would have taken two weeks in the past, is now taking one, as the children are so focused, mature about their learning and most are really using the time at home profitably to keep up to date and on task. Further, I have only had to speak to about 5 children this year about challenging behaviour at school – 4 for swearing on the playground and one for disrupting his peers during class.

#### **How can you help?**

- Come and see me if you are feeling concerned or frustrated about what I have just described so that we can discuss the difficult realities further. I am sorry if you feel I am letting you down: during a heart to heart with a parent last week, she told me that she felt that all would be well after the task team decided last year to build the new building and now it feels like we are putting more obstacles in the way. Yes, our task team was so focused on creating space for learning that we didn’t fully appreciate the implications for staffing or the weather!
- Offer to assist us with the drop off process in the mornings. At the end of March, we lose the help of our Presidential Interns who have been assisting us daily with traffic control and temperature taking. This means we will preferably need 5 people a day to assist between 7:45 and 8:30.
- Offer to assist us by looking after children on the playground during break times for a portion of the day – as all grades have different breaks, most teachers have to man the playground between classes too, so they often finish the day without even having a cup of tea! Help is needed anytime between 9 and 13:00.

- Appreciate the people who teach your children daily and continue to be positive, friendly and patient in the mornings and afternoons. I have loved connecting with so many families daily - much more than we ever did before!
- Please ensure that your children are dropped off for school on time because if they are late, a staff member has to leave class to do their screening and take their temperature.

### **SGB elections**

Please remember the online election on 13 April between 7:00 and 19:00. The Nomination Validation Meeting was held this morning and a list of nominated candidates and their bios will be sent to you soon. Each parent then who is enfranchised to vote, will receive a unique one-time personal identification number to enable you to vote for a maximum of 5 parent candidates.

### **Music**

Music applications are available throughout the year so it's never too late to reap the benefits of learning an instrument! Several music teachers have space available from next term. Find a copy of our application form online or contact Thomas de Bruin at [music@pnps.co.za](mailto:music@pnps.co.za) for inquiries. Please note that all music fees need to be paid directly to the specific teacher in charge of the lessons. This doesn't include the music offered by Thomas de Bruin as he is employed by the school. Fees for his tuition will be billed to your school account.

### **Early Act**

We have some amazing news to share! During our SPCA fundraiser we managed to collect R5,219.93! Please see the attached letter from the SPCA. Our Staff Entrepreneurial Day was also very successful and we raised R5115. Thank you for your continued support in our efforts to raise money for charities! Food Fridays will still be continuing each Friday. If the Friday is a public holiday, we will sell on Thursday. We also collected 4819 eggs during our annual Easter Egg collection and will be distributed to children who would otherwise not get anything for Easter.

### **Medication at school**

All medication needed during the day if your child is ill, should be handed to a teacher or the admin staff to administer. PLEASE ensure that ALL medication is administered and held by adults and that detailed instructions are sent with the medication. Please familiarise yourself with the Administering of Medication Policy in your child's homework book.

### **Pinelands High School Academic Awards**

Earlier this month Pinelands High School held their Academic Prize-giving Ceremony for 2020 and once again there were quite a few of our past pupils who received awards. Congratulations to: Philip Brink, Cayla Bloemetjie, Tyler Christians, Nabeela Ebrahim, Joshua Harrod, Manaal Hendricks, Zahrah Ismail Ahmed, Shannon Jansen van Rensburg, Nina Matthysen, Ian Moodley, Iman Nacerodien, Leigh Fransman, Ziyaad Abrahams, Taaraa Lakay, Jenna Lavigre, Logan Morgan, Teagan Schaffers, Asmi Sirothia, Lucian Erasmus, Matthew Redfern, Samuel Tucker, Kayla Buckroodien, Krista Rinquest, Neo Vorsatz, Safiya Abrahams, Kristen Dryding, Hannah Cloete, Caleb Kannemeyer, Hayden Lakey, Kai Reynolds, Mikhail Williams, Hannah Cloete and Roxanne D'Oliviera.

### **Applications for 2022**

Applications closed on 26 March for 2022 applications. If you haven't handed in your application, your child's application will only be considered if we don't have enough applications. A reminder too, that you need to complete the online process too. As of date, the number of applications we had already received:

417 for Red Roots for 60 pupils

251 for Grade 1 of which we cannot take 1!

139 for grade 2 to 7 of which we also cannot take 1 unless one of our families leaves.

### **Uniform**

A reminder that only sports uniform or school uniform may be worn to school daily, and not a combination of these two. No additional jackets or fleece tops may be worn over the uniform when coming to school either. Should you be concerned for your child's warmth in the classroom because all windows and doors will be open regardless of the weather, please include a fleece blanket which can be left at school. Remember hair is to be tied up and clipped away from the face, so that it doesn't impede learning!

### **Holiday Programme**

Holiday Programme will run from 28 – 30 April. The information letter is on page 5 of this newsletter and the booking form has been uploaded to the documentations tab on the Edana Portals.

### **Can you help?**

- The staff are wanting an Elmer elephant as a mascot for the school. We tried to purchase one and can only find a 20cm one. Several of our school families have family members who do patchwork...anyone accept the challenge to make us one about 30cm high?
- Needlework lessons in term 2 will be needing 'half balls' of double knitting wool and size 8/4mm knitting needles. Please send to Shereen Stadler if you can help.
- Aftercare is in need of the following items:
  - Coloured paper or patterned wrapping paper
  - Loose or strung sequins of any colour
  - Sheets of blue tissue paper, different (watery) shades of blue. They can be used/crumpled
  - Glitter
  - Coloured cardboard

Yours sincerely



ANN MORTON  
Principal

## Holiday Programme April 2021

Dear Parents

The holidays are nearly upon us and we look forward to creating lots of fun with your children.

Please use the application slip attached to apply. Fill it in, then scan and email it to [aftercare@pnps.co.za](mailto:aftercare@pnps.co.za). If you do not have access to a scanner please take a **clear picture** of your completed form and return it to us via **email only** or return a paper copy directly to Erica Steenberg in reception or to Toni or Kaylee in the Aftercare Department. **Please do not put it in your child's diary or bag, as it may get lost or missed!**

**Places are released on a first come, first served basis and payment must be made within 48 hours of your booking being confirmed by us in writing.**

Most holidays, we run 2 holiday programmes, which accommodates 50 children in total. The junior programme for Gr Rs and 1s enjoys separate, age appropriate activities which share the same theme as our older grades. In 2021 we will have a holiday programme at the end of every term (Covid-19 permitting).

The senior programme offers a maximum number of 30 spaces, so that we can keep an adequate staff to child ratio and fit into our 2 school buses for excursions. It is run at Main Aftercare. The junior programme offers a maximum of 20 places and is conducted at Red Roots. The juniors **do not** go on excursions, as higher staff to child ratios are required when the children are out in public.

The standard daily rate is R60 per child, payable in advance to the PNPS bursar by EFT, along with any additional costs which apply to the days you choose (See the schedule below for details). All charges are non-refundable and must be made within **48 hours** of your booking being confirmed. Please remember to make your EFT reference your child's first initial, their surname and HolCare (eg M.Mouse HolCare). Our banking details are: **Branch Name:** Nedbank Pinelands **Account Number:** 1047018306 **Branch code:** 104709.

**PLEASE DO NOT MAKE AN EFT UNTIL AFTERCARE CONFIRMS THAT THE SPACES YOU ARE REQUESTING ARE AVAILABLE. Please ensure that your EFT reaches us within 48 hours of your booking, or the days you booked will have to be released to children on the waiting list. Proof of payment must be sent to [bursar@pnps.co.za](mailto:bursar@pnps.co.za)**

Children should arrive at school between 08h00 and 09h30 every day. Entry for **all** Grades is via the main Aftercare gate. Please send your child in play clothes and pack a lunch, snack and juice. **NB HOLIDAY PROGRAMME RUNS FROM 08h00-17h00. A fine of R50 will be charged for every 10 minutes of lateness or part thereof.** There will be no casual drop in spaces.

**NB The 48 hour window for payment was implemented because we experienced a rise in the amount of parents who booked full time spaces as soon as bookings opened, then dropped unwanted days, just before the payment deadline. This practice made the administration of the programme unmanageable and excluded children who could have otherwise been accommodated.**

**Please note: No weapons (toy or real), cell phones or other electronic devices are allowed at Holiday Club.**