



16 March 2020

Dear Saints Family

Key decisions made by the College Executive today – Covid-19 and the remaining weeks of Term 1

This letter follows on from the one distributed at the start of the day and the email sent out early afternoon.

In a positive pooling of collective thought and action in response to the Covid-19 threat, an extended meeting of the College Executive made several important decisions today. This was a great example of Saints synergy in action and reflected our commitment as a South African school to contribute with purpose to the national campaign against the incidence of the corona virus epidemic in our country. During the afternoon, the College Executive's decisions were engaged with by the Covid-19 Saints Co-ordination Group, with the mindset of practical implementation; and school and campus department staff crafted specific action plans for the coming weeks.

In our deliberations we have drawn on our planning to date as we have engaged with Covid-19 and we have heeded President Cyril Ramaphosa's announcement last night of a national disaster and the closing of schools across the country. We recognise that responses to Covid-19 require a timeframe of months and our first phase consists of the 3.5 weeks till the end of Term 1 on Thursday 9 April. For the remainder of March, we will consider implications for the planning of Term 2, which begins on Tuesday 5 May.

My outline below provides a framework, within which each of the schools and campus departments will implement initiatives that are relevant to the phases of schooling and the core academic purposes of our College. Tomorrow morning, each school will communicate with its parents about school-specific detail.

For ease of reference, I number my points as follows:

1. Onsite learning and teaching will be suspended from tomorrow (17 March) until 9 April, as will onsite extra-mural activities. Some extra-mural activities and events will be cancelled, and others postponed.
2. From tomorrow until the end of term we will implement 'distance' and online learning, seeking to provide a different and yet high-quality learning experience for our students, appreciative of limits and opportunities. We will draw on our pioneering work in recent years in digital learning within the St Stithians curriculum; as well as create hardcopy materials as required, with plans for timetabled collection. We will innovate in fresh ways and continue to create learning opportunities that embed positive values, enhance critical skills and deepen knowledge, engaging in relevant enquiry, including the global Covid-19 epidemic.
3. Our students will stay away from campus; and will be expected to base safely at home, interacting with their teachers, and taking responsibility for their learning while being supported by parents and family members. We encourage our students to create virtual and digital teams of peer learning, where appropriate. Students may come to school tomorrow for the purposes of clearing their lockers. We recognise that specific requirements will apply to our Matrics as they complete their portfolios and assessment requirements of the IEB (Independent Examinations Board). We appreciate and understand that some households are not easily geared up for children to stay at home; and we request that a plan

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is made to implement this requirement. We rely on our parents, staff and students to collaborate in partnership.

4. Our professional and administration staff will be present at school, or will work flexibly and remotely, so long as the delivery of quality distance and online learning is met and so long as effective core business continuity is achieved. Optimal methods of deploying our Operations and contracted support staff, as well as contractors working on specific jobs on site, will be implemented, with due recognition of the use by many individuals of public transport and of living in crowded housing conditions.
5. For all our staff, education and awareness around Covid-19 prevention will be continuous; as well as provision of specially sanitised and cleaned working environments, to the best of our ability. So far as is practicable, meetings among staff will be virtual and digital.
6. The Saints Sports Festival is cancelled for the Preps (2-4 April) and the Colleges (8-13 April). There is much involved in the cancellation of these very large events and a communication protocol is being implemented with our participating schools, sponsors and vendors. We intend to preserve goodwill for the future of these great events.
7. We await recommendations from the calendar committee of the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA) about possible modification of term dates for the remainder of the year. The current position of the College Executive is that any change to term dates is not advisable for us and will be made only in the last resort.
8. In the spirit of physical school closure, the Peter Place Gate will be the only access gate to the campus for the remainder of term. The Corlett and Hurlingham gates will be closed. The One and All gate will be open for access to the One and All Club and Higher Ground Restaurant. Entry at the Peter Place gate will be closely monitored and managed by the security guards.
9. Physical exercise, wellness and sunshine are important in combatting Covid-19. We will therefore allow members of currently registered St Stithians families, with 2020 vehicle stickers, to access the campus for individual activities such as walking and jogging, but not for any team or contact sports, even if informal. This concession of allowing members of our Saints families to engage only in individual exercise will be carefully monitored and a future decision may involve closing the campus to such activity. All students participating in individual activity need to do so under parental supervision. Members of the Warriner Centre High Performance Centre will be issued with ID cards to enable continued access of this facility under controlled conditions. It is anticipated that, due to low volumes of trade, the coffee, uniform and sports shops will close, with the details of this still to be finalised.

Finally, as agreed with the Chair of Council, Carel Nolte, core governance activities will continue, with meetings being structured mainly around documented reporting and response; and virtual or telephonic interaction. The Term 1 Council meeting will take place under structured and controlled conditions.

This is a detailed letter and I thank you for reading it. Let us as the Saints Family be Stronger One and All as we face into Covid-19 and let us be kind and gentle to one another as we do so.

Yours sincerely



Dr T A Nuttall Rector