



24 March 2020

Dear Saints Family

Covid-19 and National Lockdown

'Be Stronger One and All'. In January this year, the College Executive decided that Be Stronger One and All would be the College's focal theme for 2020. Little did we know then that within three months we would be living in the moment of an unprecedented national and global health crisis. Now, more than ever, we need to draw together in unity of purpose and appreciation of our common humanity across communities, countries and continents.

We pray for God's protection of our land and our people.

Last night President Ramaphosa announced a National Lockdown, effective from midnight on Thursday 26 March for 21 days until 16 April. This sombre announcement followed on from our President's declaration of a national disaster on 15 March, which resulted in the closure of onsite learning and teaching at St Stithians last Tuesday.

We made the quick transition to Online and Distance Learning (ODL for short) last week. I thank our staff, students and parents warmly, and with a deep sense of appreciation, for the multiple ways in which you have implemented ODL from Grades R to 12. To have achieved this with a blend of digital learning platforms across Microsoft, Google and Apple is a testament to the pioneering work done in our schools in recent years, with our Digital Learning Coaches the change and support agents. Alongside the digital, we have created workbooks for printing or collection in hardcopy versions, particularly for the younger students. In the school and campus administration and operations functions we have ensured business continuity in difficult conditions. This is new territory for #SaintsExcellence and we have truly lived out #Be-Stronger-One-And-All.

The College Executive met yesterday and again this morning online via Microsoft Teams. Our decision, in response to the National Lockdown, is that we will continue with Online and Distance Learning until the end of term on 9 April. In this intent, while also maintaining business continuity in our management and administration, we will face additional logistical challenges due to the lockdown of movement outside of our homes. We will do all that we can to ensure the momentum, routine and learning that we began last week, in the tremendous collective effort of our staff, students and parents.

A school is a place of learning and growth, with all the beautiful energy of young people, and with dedicated staff and parents taking care of the rising generation. In these difficult times, may St Stithians be an oasis of hope.

I express thanks and appreciation to our Chair of Council, Carel Nolte, our Deputy Chair, Ntombi Langa-Royds, and Council members for their support and guidance.

From Thursday night until 16 April, the St Stithians campus will be closed, and gates locked, with access only for on-campus residents and for essential deliveries, carefully controlled. All employed and

INSPIRING EXCELLENCE. MAKING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

contracted staff will be at-home, except for necessary security personnel – and I take this opportunity to say a big thank you to our security team who will continue to work onsite during the lockdown.

We recognise the potential for significant disruption of our national economy, with huge ripple effects. In this context, we thank our parents for your school fee payments which are critical to the business continuity of the College. We have limited variable costs that can be adjusted in the context of school closure. We understand and appreciate the economic strain that the Covid-19 crisis is placing on many of our families.

Listening to President Ramaphosa last night, you would have heard him appeal to South Africans ‘One and All’ to pull together in this time of national and global crisis. I cannot know for sure, but our President’s use of the Saints motto may have drawn on his experience as a former parent at our College and a member of the St Stithians Foundation in the early 2000s.

Be prayerful.

Be safe, care for one another.

Be kind, be wise.

Be Stronger One and All.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Nuttall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line above the first letter 'T'.

Dr T A Nuttall
Rector