



21 January 2021

Dear Saints families

This week saw our students returning to online schooling. We were so looking forward to having them on campus, it was not to be.

Our students are ready for the school year, their eagerness and enthusiasm are what makes teaching such a joy. We understand though that there were a few onboarding problems and load shedding brought its own challenges, the schools will be liaising with you with regards to these particular issues.

There have been several comments and questions regarding our independence and our rights. We are an Independent School and this independence allows us choice in many critical areas, for example, our choice of school learning certificate. However, we need to be mindful of the directives from the National Command Council and the fact that we are accountable to the Department of Basic Education, the call to close schools for a period of time is not a choice independent schools have, this was seen this week after the Gauteng MEC for Basic Education, Mr Panyaza Lesufi, visited and discussed the issue with Independent Schools who chose not to heed the call from the Minister of Education. Soon afterwards those schools closed their physical sites and have moved on to online teaching.

I would like to reassure you that the decision to close onsite teaching and learning was not taken lightly, we continue to work closely with our organisation - ISASA who in turn is working closely with the Department and ensuring that the needs and rights of the independent sector are heard. We are aware that there have been reports in the media from the Deputy Minister of Education, stating that independent schools can open even if public schools do not. ISASA is investigating this on our behalf.

Grade R

There seems to be some confusion regarding our Grade R return to school.

Grade R falls under the Department of Education. Schools who have Grade Rs on their site and who are registered as one school in our case, St Stithians College, may not bring their Grade R onsite. Grade Rs who belong to an independent, stand-alone Early Childhood Development (ECD) center may return to school as these ECD centers are accountable to the Department of Social Development.

Sport and Exercise on Campus

With the recent announcement by our President that we are to return to an amended Level 3 status, plus the fact that schools have had to delay opening by two weeks, we undertook to conduct some research and communicate the current state of play regarding school sport, which at best is fluid. Kindly note that at this stage only Federation Covid approved and compliant Covid venues may be used. People who are allowed to make use of these venues are fully compliant clubs or, in our case, students with a valid provincial and or national federation registration number.

Regrettably the sport codes listed below are not permitting any activity as stipulated by their federations until further notice:

- [Football](#)
- [Netball](#)
- [Athletics](#)
- [Rugby](#)

- Basketball - we are awaiting feedback from Mr Sibongile Fondini, who is the BSA Vice President.
- Mountain Biking/ Cycling- are meeting this week and will provide feedback.

Code specific protocols that are permitted to train under the guidance and strict regulations of their federations which permit clubs and either provincial or nationally registered sportsmen and women to train, are listed below. Kindly click on the code links of interest for important details:

Rowing

- [Additional Documentation 1](#)
- [Additional Documentation 2](#)

Cricket

- [Additional Documentation 2](#)
- [Additional Documentation 3](#)

Tennis

- [Additional Documentation 1](#)
- [Additional Documentation 2](#)

Swimming

- [Additional Documentation 1](#)
- [Additional Documentation 2](#)

Squash

Contact Sports

- [Water Polo](#)
- [Hockey](#)
 - [Additional Documentation 1](#)

* If a particular sport is not listed, these details will be communicated at a later date.

Kindly also take note of the professional staff who serve as compliance officers for their code and sporting facilities where non-contact practise - small group and one on one training (for all codes) may take place.

Aquatics Centre:	Richard Little	rlittle@stithian.com
Athletics:	Greg Carter	gcarter@stithian.com
Basketball:	Mandla Faku	mfaku@stithian.com
Cricket:	Wim Jansen	wjansen@stithian.com
Football:	Justin Collett	justincollettsports@gmail.com
Hockey:	Robin van Ginkel	rvginkel@stithian.com
Netball:	Nicky White	nwhite@stithian.com
Rowing:	Devin Cripwell	dcripwell@stithian.com
Rugby:	Thoriso Shihau	tshihau@stithian.com
Tennis:	Marius Masenkamp	mmasenkamp@stithian.com
Warriner HP Centre:	Nic Tessendorf	nic@purefit.co.za
Water Polo:	Justin McDougall	jmcdougall@stithian.com

School sport under the current regulations is not allowed. We do, however, strongly encourage all our students to participate in the online athletic development classes which our sports staff have developed and uploaded, and any of the training programmes which have been shared with our students.

We remain hopeful that soon we will have our students safely back on our fields.

INSPIRING EXCELLENCE. MAKING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Affiliations: Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA) | Independent Examinations Board (IEB)
The Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) | Round Square | Proudly South African

PBO: 181113631 | NPO: 119-838-NPO

Stickers

Please could parents collect their 2021 vehicle stickers from the Operations Department. There will be a red and white tent set up outside the Semono Building (near Higher Ground – on the grassed area). Dates and times will be as follows:

If school starts on 1 Feb:

1 – 12 February from 07h00 – 09h00 and then from 12h00 – 15h00

If school starts on 15 Feb:

15 – 26 February from 07h00 – 09h00 and then from 12h00 – 15h00

We will confirm which date nearer the time as the return to school date for Independent Schools is still under discussion with the department.

Medical Details

We urge you to ensure that the medical details on the secure portal are correct, it is critical that the information is up to date.

Please could you ensure that the medical information of your children is checked and corrected / updated as and when any information changes. It is important for the schools to have up to date information in the event of an incident - this could save your child's life. Please take 5 minutes to log into the secure portal and update any medical information on your child/ren. This will also avoid having to fill in additional medical forms from the schools as they will be able to access this information as required when going on outings, camps, tours or when there is an incident on campus. If there is additional medical information that you would like any of the schools to know about your child that is sensitive in nature or cannot be included on the form on the portal, please discuss this with the teacher of your child or the Head or Deputy Head of the School.

Wearing of Masks

The Stythian Shop is selling the St Stithians face masks, so if you are still needing to buy masks, please support them. Please note that buffs are not considered adequate protection for the wearer or the person they are within close proximity to, so buffs will not be allowed to be worn by students and staff.

It would be helpful for children to have at least 2 masks (3 layered) each day with them as sometimes the masks get soiled / wet and then they are not able to wear the mask.

Whilst the schools have adequate supplies of hand sanitiser, it is always good practice to keep your own pocket size bottle on your person to use in those situations where you perhaps cannot get to sanitiser quickly.

Please remind your children of the COVID-19 guidelines about:

- a. wearing a face mask at all times other than when eating or drinking and when eating together in groups, to keep a safe distance from one another
- b. practice social distancing as much as possible – minimum of 1.5m from the next person
- c. avoid hugging and kissing each other – especially on the first day of school when there is much excitement around seeing each other after the holidays
- d. wash your hands with soap and water (preferred method) or sanitise hands frequently throughout the day
- e. inform your teacher or any staff member immediately you are not feeling well or start presenting with any COVID-19 symptoms – do not wait until home time as you could be spreading the virus

Exercise on Campus

We are pleased to announce that we are still in a position to open our campus to our families for exercise.

We ask that you please adhere to the requests below:

- Only students, staff, parents, Trust and Council Members, paid up Old Stithians Association members and their parents to be permitted onto campus to exercise
- Only walking (with or without dogs), jogging or cycling to be permitted around the ring road / mountain bike track
- We ask that you pre-register your intention to use the campus to exercise on the link below: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfRIMEZQKWB8ujBXvm_jVRNKHjInNwCLYeQGLiUicOnPHw5iQ/viewform?usp=sf_link
- Please note that this link is not to be forwarded to friends or family as it is for the immediate Saints community only at this time and that applications received are monitored closely
- Access through Peter Place and Hurlingham gates only
- Must wear mask when approaching / nearing other people – we realise that exercising with a mask on is not great, but do request that you respect others and put your mask on when nearing other people
- Hours allowed to exercise 06h00 – 18h00
- No sports facilities to be used
- Exercise can be with no more than 4 people in a group
- Anyone found not to be complying with any of the above could risk being asked to leave the campus and further access to exercise on campus denied

Access to Campus

There have been a few issues with the licence plate recognition system, and we apologise for this, however, we have had the teams working to resolve this matter and this will be resolved by the end of January 2021. If however you still experience problems please let us know by e-mailing rswart@stithian.com or calling 011 577-6381 during office hours. Please note that demarcations of where you should drive your vehicle when approaching the booms have been painted on the road. On monitoring the access points on Saturday, it is noted that some people drive at speed up to the boom and then the boom does not open – please approach the boom slowly to allow the camera time to register your licence plate, do not drive past the markings on the road and this should help with the booms opening. All vehicles which have been registered on the portal have been added to the LPR (Licence Plate Recognition) system, so if you have purchased a new vehicle after the 15th January 2021, please add it on the portal as you would normally do and this information is checked on a daily basis and updated on the LPR system accordingly.

Procurement Policy

In keeping with sound governance, accounting and financial systems, St Stithians College purchases goods and services according to established procurement procedures. The [Procurement Policy](#) creates the framework for purchasing transactions and tendering processes. The decision whether goods or services are procured in-house or outsourced is an Executive/Management decision based on cost-benefit and other appropriate evaluations. Once the purchasing/outsourcing decision has been taken there are basic principles which must be adhered to by purchasing agents within St Stithians College.

Please note that the College's Procurement Policy has been updated. Kindly familiarise yourself with the Policy document which could be found on the following link:

https://www.stithian.com/uploads/files/Information/St_Stithians_College_Procurement_Policy_26_October_2020.pdf

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Finance Department

The Finance Team is continuing to work remotely. Zoom or Team meetings are available and may be arranged by contacting 011 577 6219 or accounts@stithian.com. Direct extensions have been diverted to cell numbers to ensure service continuity. Access to the Finance office is only available on an appointment basis. Please contact 011 577 6219 to make an appointment for an on-site meeting/access to the Henning Block Finance Offices. Please note that access will only be granted once screening has been completed at an on-site screening station and a screening sticker obtained. A mask will be required to be worn while in the office block.

Condolences

Our deepest condolences to our students and families who have lost close family members due to Covid-19 or other causes. We continue to keep you in our prayers.

We also keep in our prayers the families of Saints alumni and others in our Saints community who have passed away, we stand together with you during this time of bereavement. Please inform us through your child's teacher if you or your family are in need of prayers and support.

The disappointment of not being able to return to onsite schooling has understandably caused additional stress for our Saints community. We will continue to do all we can to manage this situation as best we can and to keep you informed. We encourage you to keep communicating with your child's teachers and do not hesitate to contact them should you have any concerns.

We thank you One and All for your understanding as we find our path through these uncertain times, and we continue to pray that we will be a beacon of hope, light and strength for the Saints Community.

Kind regards,
Celeste



Celeste Gilardi
Rector: St Stithians College