



# Graeme College

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28 January 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians

Re: Update re return to school - 2021

The school governing body and staff management team have been patiently waiting for further correspondence from the department, with regards to learners returning to school in 2021. We had been told that all learners in the Junior School and Senior School could return on 15 February but we are awaiting the official update to the gazette.

We are obviously aware of the anxiety amongst our community in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic with many of us being exposed directly to the virus in one form or another. Our thoughts and prayers remain with those families who have experienced loss as a result of the pandemic. We are also cognisant of the impact this has on our community and the fact that we believe it is in the best interest of our boys that they get back into a set routine and start engaging with their teachers and peers. It is with this in mind that we have decided to follow a cautious but progressive plan to start the academic year. The majority of our learners have adopted their own academic disciplines and programmes at home and this is where the learner-educator-parent partnership is so vital. Parents must set boundaries at home and insist that schoolwork is completed. There will be an extensive extra lesson programme available when the boys return to school for those who require any extra support for the work covered during this period. At this stage we are confident that all lost teaching time will be made up.

Our Pre-School has already opened on 27 January for all learners in Grade OO and R. This will be on a voluntary basis with regards to parent consideration for each learner. The Education Department has confirmed that Pre-Schools can open to assist working parents.

We have had to postpone Founders Weekend to August (date to be confirmed), which will hopefully include a home rugby derby. There is just too much concern around the 'super spreader' events which resulted in the decision to postpone the event. We are also currently confirming a new date for Rugby Day this year; which will hopefully be able to take place towards the end of Term 2. A summary of the plan to start the year is outlined below. We are handing out textbooks during an Orientation Programme between 10 and 12 February, which will allow us to start actual teaching on 15 February. Boarders will arrive a day before their Orientation Day.

Adjustments to the school calendar are underway; we have received a draft proposal as to the suggested school terms and holidays. The current proposal is for the first term to start on 15 February and end on 23 April. Term 2 would then start on 3 May and end on 9 July. The current proposal would have 198 teaching days, as opposed to the 200 that would normally have been planned without Covid changes.

Sport and extra-curricular training may continue for non-contact sport – without spectators. However, the national sport bodies will provide greater clarity regarding each sport in regard to official competitions. We are in constant communication with those sports bodies. Aftercare will also resume from 1 February for the Pre-Primary learners and on 15 February for Grade 1-6.

Obviously, we ask families to be sensible with regards to any possible covid symptoms and not wait for a positive test result. If your child feels sick, has a cough, a fever or an upset stomach - please keep them at home.

Please take special note of the arrangements around the Orientation Week which runs from 10 to 12 February. We will have the learners at school to collect textbooks, confirm timetables and complete admin tasks so that we can start teaching on 15 February. Junior School classes will go straight to register teacher venues, while Senior School grades will meet in the hall as per scheduled time allocations. There will also be an opportunity to chat to each subject teacher during the orientation as well.

**Wed 10 February**

Grade 4 & 5 - in register classes - 08h00 (until 10h30)

Grade 8 - 08h00 in hall (until 10h30)

Grade 12 - 10h00 in hall (until 12h30)

**Thu 11 February**

Grade 6 & 7 - in register classes - 08h00 (until 10h30)

Grade 9 - 08h00 in hall (until 10h30)

**Fri 12 February**

Grade 10 - 08h00 in hall (until 10h30)

Grade 11 - 10h00 in hall (until 12h30)

Learners will be expected to arrive in full school tracksuit on their Orientation Day. If they don't have a full tracksuit, they are then expected to wear the full school uniform. After a lengthy break from school and normal protocols, we ask parents to make sure all hair styles are neat and are appropriately aligned with the School Code of Conduct. We are requesting that this is suitably adhered to, and that we need to start the year in the correct frame of mind with regards to personal neatness and discipline. We would like to avoid unhappiness and confrontation at the start of the new year and therefore request that all school rules are strictly adhered to during the orientation period and start of the year.

## **Start of 2021 - Revised Programme**

- 25 January SMT / Ground Staff / Admin Staff return to school
- 27 January Pre-school open (voluntary for parents)
- 28 January Full Staff Meeting - Zoom
- 1 February Teaching Staff / Boarding Staff return to school
- 8 February Boarders return - Grade 12
- 9 February Boarders return - Grade 4, 5, 8
- 10 February Textbook/ notes collection (G 4, 5, 8, 12)  
U14 Cricket Trials (11h00)
- 10 February Boarders return - Grade 6, 7, 9
- 11 February Textbook/ notes collection (G 6, 7, 9)
- 11 February Boarders return - Grade 10 & 11
- 12 February Textbook/ notes collection (G 10 & 11)
- 14 February School Leadership Camp (Snr School)
- 15 February Start of Academic year  
Junior School Grades Return (Grades 1-7) - all learners  
Senior School Grades Return (Grades 8-12) - all learners

If you have any concerns regarding your son please communicate these with us. Please note that this process is very fluid and that we will expect to have a few more changes along the way.

Yours sincerely



Mr Kevin Watson  
Headmaster



