



**PARKTOWN BOYS'
HIGH SCHOOL**



July 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

Parktown Boys' High School 2020

Founded in 1923 Parktown approaches 'Parktown 100', its centenary year in 2023.

Parktown Boys' High School is set on continuing on our path of ensuring that we maintain our position as a flagship school of the Gauteng Department of Education, and Monastic Public Schools in particular, offering a high-quality education on a par with other top schools in the country – be they Independent or Public schools. We believe our role is to ensure that we develop the values-based moral leaders of tomorrow, who have a full understanding of the concept of service to others, and have been equipped with the skills to fulfil their potential. This will enable them to play their part in ensuring that the pressing broader societal goals of our country are met in as short a time span as possible.

Over the past ninety-seven years Parktown Boys' High School has established itself as one of the top schools in the country, a position it still holds today. The School was one of the first schools to embrace the positive changes our country has undergone and we celebrate our diversity as a school.

We are a Values-Based School, founded upon the Core Value of 'Respect for All'. Our School DNA sets out clearly what we must do more of and also identifies those unhealthy behaviours we must do less of. This exercise was undertaken in the late 2000's and included input from students, staff, parents and alumni. We expect all of those who join our community to respect the School's values-based ethos. It is upon these values that all that we do in our school is based.

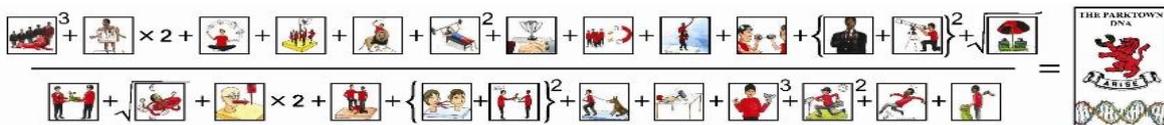
Over time the School has developed five key pillars to its high quality holistic education: Academic; Cultural; Sport; Leadership and Service.

We are committed to anti-discriminatory practices, and to serving the needs of those in the greater Johannesburg community who wish to have their sons benefit from a monastic education.

In sustaining our track record of excellence – at the core of our long-term development goals – our focus must be on maintaining the quality holistic education we offer currently. We are a "six-day-a-week" school (and sometimes seven!) and it is this quality, values-based education which has so many parents expressing interest in Parktown Boys' High School. We believe it to be most important that we continue to be able to offer our current high-quality holistic educational model – and to sustain the resources we require to do so. It stands to reason that should we not be able to sustain these resources, the viability of the school would be under threat.

We are blessed with a number of additional facilities which are central to our being able to offer the holistic education we offer, and to continue to compete with the best schools in the country. These facilities include the School's Astroturf artificial surface; the Sports Centre, including Indoor Gym, indoor cricket nets, three squash courts, and ablution block; the Surgite House Sports Pavilion; four additional classrooms and two additional laboratories; the School's new boarding house, which has enabled us to grow our boarding numbers. All of these facilities have been funded in the main by Alumni of the School.

We are proud of being a top public boys' day and boarding school, which consistently achieves excellence across all fronts. We have met our transformation goals, and we shall continue to embrace diversity and provide opportunities for boys from different socio-economic circumstances, religions, cultures and races to attend our School. We now represent fully all of those who are part of our dynamic 'Rainbow Nation'. We





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celebrate also the growth in the diversity of our staff team over the past few years. I am pleased that we have retained key staff and are attracting top candidates whenever a position has been advertised.

We remain committed to funding bursaries and scholarships, through our Alumni network and wider Parktonian community, for financially disadvantaged pupils who show potential and who would benefit from being nurtured and supported in our environment. The level of support received, however, provides support only for a limited number of students.

The Covid 19 Pandemic - A Changed World

The unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic and the camp tragedy are, of course, not the only challenges we face. Parktown Boys' High School continues in the process of healing from painful incidents in its past. I look back to April 2018 when a new SGB took office, including nine volunteer parent members, and in August of that year when I joined as the new Headmaster, with us all focused on refreshing and accelerating the required changes to the school's processes, structures and culture, guided by a return to the School's Core Values and DNA, with *'Respect for All'* at its centre.

What is important is that the School has owned its history. I want to assure you that the unrelenting and shared focus on the process of healing, learning and advancing transformation that we have embarked upon to forever change our culture over the past two years will not be diminished by the demands of the COVID-19 Pandemic. We are called upon again to show our mettle, our resilience, and our care for the person next to us.

Times of great change bring with it anxiety, uncertainty and fear of the unknown. The period of Lockdown has not been easy; the initial 'euphoria' of the novelty of being 'on extended holiday' during the first few weeks is long gone and all of us have been impacted by the pandemic. The School is not immune to this, and for us to continue to offer the high quality holistic education we currently offer as a top public boys' school we shall have to pull together as a school community, along with the ongoing support of our Alumni and other external donors.

Times of great change also bring great opportunity, along with anxiety and uncertainty. I believe we are up to the challenges that face us. Our senior boys have been open and frank about their disappointment at their Matric year having gone 'pear-shaped'; they have expressed anxiety about some of the health challenges posed by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

But they also showed a determination to lead the School through this most difficult time.

I have been inspired by the measured, calm and sincere motivational addresses to the School community by Head Prefect, O'Neill Chihwayi, who has instinctively understood the gravity of the moment. Deputy Head Prefect Andile Dlongwana's impromptu response during a recent meeting before the return to School also hit the mark. At one point he interrupted me, saying, *"Sorry Sir, it's OK. Don't worry, we can do this....yes, it's going to be tough, but we're up for it. We're coming back to School...let's get on with it."* The nods of agreement from the other Prefects hammered home the point.

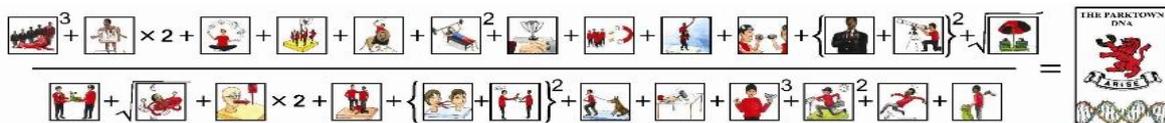
Our SEC video message to their Pride of Brothers, ***"We Will Be Home Soon!"*** says it all.

Follow this link to our Facebook page:

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2945011132234570&id=174354369300274

The inspiring words of 2020 Head Prefect, O'Neill Chihwayi, sends a clear message of what is to be gained from being a part of the Parktown Boys' Family.

Please view his address at <https://www.facebook.com/174354369300274/posts/2847431531992531/>.





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The School Band's virtual performances have been a tonic during Lockdown, as have comments by other boys.

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<https://www.facebook.com/174354369300274/posts/2949748348427515/>

Melusi Sibiyi (Open Rugby) <https://www.facebook.com/174354369300274/posts/2827248354010849/>

Yorke Chetty (Open Hockey) <https://www.facebook.com/174354369300274/posts/2827492923986392/>

Nicholas Townsend (U14 Hockey) <https://www.facebook.com/174354369300274/posts/2837387122996972/>

We continue to maintain and enhance what we offer as a school: a high-quality holistic education which is focused on growing our boys into the leaders of the future - with a sense of purpose and a strong sense of civic responsibility. In our current reality this must remain a key goal, given the uncharted and choppy waters we are sailing in.

Our School Motto, 'Surgite' ('Arise') speaks to how we must face the challenges of this world-changing time. It is about stepping up and facing the obstacles which have been placed in our way, and to do so with resilience, compassion and fortitude. Our planning is already focusing on how we shall achieve all of our goals after the period of lockdown; we know that we will be returning to a 'new normal' and we have the necessary flexibility in our approach to adapt as required.

What guides us in all of the above pursuits is what is at our centre: our School's Core Values, our DNA. We remain fully committed to our focus on Values-Based Moral Leadership which helps ensure that we grow good husbands, good sons, good fathers and good brothers who make a difference in their school, in their communities and in society as a whole.

We celebrate our boys' public stands against all forms of gender based violence and child abuse, and having the courage to speak out against all such actions; we celebrate their acknowledgement of the need to respect others at all times, and to grow self-respect; we celebrate our Seniors understanding the onus on them to earn respect, rather than demand it, and to model positive behaviours; we celebrate their understanding of their role as mentors to the juniors; we celebrate the positive energies this generates in our school community.

We believe strongly that it is essential for our country to have top-performing public schools celebrating excellence, and performing at the same level as the best Independent schools in the country. Given the small percentage of Independent Schools across the whole education system, we can only effect real development and upliftment of the whole system through ensuring that the beacons of excellence in the public school system can be placed in a position where we can sustain, and improve, these levels of excellence.

We look forward to engaging with you further.

Stay Safe!

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Williams

Headmaster

