



Principal's Newsletter 2nd July, 2021

Dear Parents & Guardians,

1. ELearning (Online Lessons)

We find ourselves having to resort to Online Learning again and I implore all the stakeholders (Teachers, Students and Parents) to quickly embrace this and make the best of the situation. I am particularly concerned about the Examination Classes which are due to write their public exams in less than 5 months. I am also concerned about maintaining the age appropriate learning that will be affected in the long run if we do not make the Online Learning efficient and effective.

Online Lessons will start on Monday 5th July, 2021. Timetables have been posted on all the respective Tutor Groups. Please make sure you look at your timetable together with your children over the weekend to make sure you are not caught unawares when lessons start on Monday. With this in mind please may we all take note of our respective roles and what is expected of us to make the online learning program a success;

The Role of the Teacher

- a. To post lessons every day on Google Classroom –This will be up and running from Monday 2nd July, 2021.
- b. To be available during lesson times for questions and interaction with the students.
- c. To use various platforms to teach from and to ensure that all subject matter is taught.
- d. All lesson interactions will be recorded and will be available to students who could not gain internet access at the time of the lesson.
- e. To create a Whatsapp group for their classes and in this way giving the students easy access to the teacher and also for the teacher to be able to check that all students are engaging with the lesson.
- f. To invite and give Parents/Guardians access to a weekly synopsis of lessons and work done.
- g. To ensure that students submit work required and to give feedback to parents and students when they have not met the deadlines as set.
- h. To create an on-line environment that is conducive to learning and offers support where needed.
- i. To ensure that contact is maintained and that the well-being of the students is always at the forefront of what we are doing.

The Role of the Students

- a. To ensure your working space is ready for starting on Monday. Have your notebooks, textbooks, calculators and stationery ready and organised. Make sure that the things that you know will distract you are removed from your working area.
- b. Wake Up, Get Up, Show Up and Log onto Google Classroom. Don't Give Up until you have completed your day's schoolwork.
- c. Take responsibility for your school day and for the role you play in your own education.

- d. To follow your timetable for the day and to listen to each of your lessons and to follow the instructions given.
- e. Have a diary so that you can make entries to ensure that you do not miss deadlines given.
- f. To communicate with your teachers if you are not clear about the instructions or if you need further explanation of the lesson given.
- g. To ensure that you only stay on-line for as long as necessary. Download your activities, lessons and worksheets and, work off-line.
- h. Classroom recordings may not be shared on public forums without explicit permission being granted by the teacher and the pupils involved.
- i. To use the Whatsapp groups created to communicate with your teacher during your lessons so that you can ask questions without having to be on-line.
- j. To use the class Whatsapp groups for academic purposes and not for banter with your classmates. Be respectful of your teachers and their personal space.
- k. With particular reference to the Form 1 Students – we had a reshuffle of the Form 1 Stream after the Common Tests and as a result there will be a change of Subject Teachers for some students. If you have not received an invite for a particular subject on Monday please contact your Tutor or the school office to have this resolved.
- l. To upload any work required for submission and to communicate with your teacher if you need assistance in this regard.
- m. Make sure you have breaks and take time away from your screens. Be careful to not have overly extended break times.
- n. Most importantly stay in touch with your teachers – let them know where you are at.
- o. Do not stress – everything you need, in terms of academic information, for your classes and for learning to continue will be provided by your teacher.
- p. You are resilient and able to adapt, so quickly do so and enjoy your classes – we are here for you!

The Role of the Parent

As a parent your role is not to have to teach your child but to facilitate the process.

- a. To create a designated space for learning – a distraction-free zone; an area where your child can focus on their school work.
- b. To ensure that your child gets up and logs on to the Google Classroom to see their lessons for the day – don't underestimate the power of a schedule.
- c. To interact with your child and to check with them that they have completed the work that they are required to do for the day.
- d. If your child is unsure of what is expected from them you need to ask the following questions: 'Have you asked your teacher for assistance?' and, 'What did your teacher say when you asked for help?'
- e. To ensure that your child has an Internet connection and sufficient data to complete what is required. Please note it is not necessary for your child to be on-line all day – they can download the required work/lesson and then work off-line. Their teachers are available on Whatsapp as well.
- f. Classroom recordings may not be shared on public forums without explicit permission being granted by the teacher and the pupils involved.
- g. Monitor the length of breaks but please allow them to take breaks and have snacks.
- h. If you have concerns make contact with the Subject (College) or Class (Prep) teacher or contact, for the College, the Director of Studies, Mr. Matanga (0774030208), the Deputy Heads, Mr. Nhema (0772137027) and Mr. Chipato (0772137036) and for the Prep School, Mr. Mutangadura (0772100746) and Mr. Nyakudzuka (0772389217) so that they help resolve the problem.

- i. Allow them to interact with friends – your child is used to lots of social contact at school, so they will definitely feel the effects of being distanced from each other.
- j. To motivate your child – this can be anything from establishing a goal, offering incentives and celebrating achievements. This all shows your child that their efforts don't go unnoticed.
- k. Do not panic – we will get through this together!

We need to be prepared for the possibility of a prolonged lockdown and should therefore make sure that we all play our part. For students who are doing course work as part of their public examination requirements, I ask both Teachers and Parents to encourage Students to work and complete their projects and not wait to return to school in order to do so.

Of utmost importance is COMMUNICATION. Make contact and let us know where we can help and please, I will welcome any feedback from both the students and parents.

2. Parental Concerns

I have had some parents, whose children are writing their public examinations in October/November, share their concerns and reservations over Online Learning. I know that Online Learning is not the best approach to instructing our Students as compared to actual Classroom Learning. Yes, Online Learning has its short comings but Hillcrest Schools, as all schools nationwide, has to comply with the Government's directive to observe the Covid-19 Lockdown Regulations. Please note that I am very open to suggestions from Parents and will welcome a phone call or an email that helps address this pertinent issue we face in order to help our children attain their best during the lockdown.

3. School Fees

A notice for the school fees deposit payment was sent out a few weeks ago. I encourage parents to pay what is due and not to wait for the last minute.

4. Cambridge Exams Registration

The deadline for Examination Registration for the October/November Exam Session was 25th June, 2021. Please be advised that the Exams Office is now proceeding to register with Cambridge students who have made their relevant payments.

5. School Calendar

We will try to have our Internal Calendar published on Tuesday 3rd July in line with the Online Lessons starting on Monday 2nd July.

I wish you all continued strength during this period. Do have a good weekend and remember to remain safe.

Kind regards,



ORLANDO FERNANDES
PRINCIPAL – HILLCREST SCHOOLS