



# RAND PREPARATORY AND COLLEGE NPC

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## Newsletter No 4 of 2020

30 April 2020

Dear Parents,

### REOPENING OF SCHOOLS: COVID-19

I hope that you and your family are well and surviving the lockdown under these trying times.

Like most of South Africa, we have been following the government's announcements on the possible reopening of schools. We are scheduled to hear from the Basic Department of Education exactly when this will take place. We have also had communication from various teacher organisations indicating that they have an expectation that certain measures must be put into place before schooling can resume, and that under no circumstances, can schools reopen unless such measures are in place. At this stage, I would like to share with you, Rand Preparatory and College's position on the reopening of schools. This will also allow you to be prepared.

### THE CHILD'S HEALTH:

Contrary to some rumours going around, the latest evidence suggests that children are just as susceptible to COVID-19 as adults. There are also children who fall into the high risk categories such as those children who have respiratory illnesses, asthma and those with underlying medical conditions.

We have to take adequate preventative measures to protect all children.

We also have a number of children who go home to elderly grandparents, parents who themselves may be at higher risk of death from Covid-19 due to underlying medical conditions and if a child was to become exposed to the virus at school, they very well may carry this home and infect their parents, siblings and grandparents.

### THE STAFF MEMBER'S HEALTH:

We have a number of teachers who are either over the age of 60 or suffer from underlying medical conditions. These teachers too, like the children, need to be protected from the possibility of COVID-19 transmission. Similarly, these teachers have families at home and just as with the children, we would not want this virus to be transferred from school to the family at home.

### THE PARENT/GRANDPARENT'S HEALTH:

No child lives in isolation. Therefore, we must recognize that children will come into contact with their parents or grandparents or caregivers on a daily basis. Parents too, will come into

contact with other people through work or other social contexts. The opportunity for transmission of the virus can occur between parent and child and between child to parent. It is therefore in everyone's interest that we protect the family dynamic to prevent the spread of the virus.

### **TRANSPORT:**

Many of our children make use of taxis and other public transport to and from school. During this time, they potentially can come into contact with children from other areas who may be exposed to the virus. Parents are urged to discuss sanitization protocols with taxi operators and ensure that children are not exposed to risk when using these means of transport.

### **THE WAY GOING FORWARD:**

I have spent many hours doing research on the best practices to implement going forward. I have looked at the experiences of other schools in other countries and also read through government gazettes and listened to input made from various people on various media. From this, I have gleaned the following information:

When schools reopen, measures must be put into place to prevent the transmission of Covid-19. These measures will mean that:

#### **1. ALL CHILDREN AND STAFF MUST WEAR FACE MASKS AT ALL TIMES.**

- a. These masks are to be provided by the parents and must be at least three layer material masks that cover the mouth and nose at all times.
- b. These masks must be worn before a child leaves home and remain in place until after the child gets home.
- c. Obviously, the mask may be removed to eat and drink but must be put in place once this is done
- d. Ideally, a child/staff member should have a spare mask so that roughly after 3 hours, the mask can be replaced with a new one.

#### **2. SANITIZING AND SCREENING:**

- a. Children must carry a bottle of hand sanitizer with them at all times.
- b. As a child arrives at school, staff members will apply sanitizer to their hands.
- c. A forehead temperature reading will be taken as children enter school. Any child with an elevated temperature will immediately be isolated and parents contacted so that further investigation can take place.
- d. Social distancing **MUST** be observed. Children may not be closer than 1.5m from each other. This applies as children enter the school and will last until they leave the school.
- e. During the course of the day, the movement of children around the school will be kept to an absolutely minimum. The staff are still exploring ways that this can be achieved.
- f. At the end of each period, children will be required to sanitize their hands. Each classroom will have sanitizer provided.
- g. At the end of the day, as children leave the school, a staff member will once again sanitize the hands of all children leaving.

### **3. CLASS SIZES:**

- a. No class size will exceed 12 learners. This may mean that in certain grades, children may only attend classes every second day. As each grade has a different number of children, we will provide instructions to parents and children in those grades on an individual basis.
- b. Break times may be staggered to minimize the exposure that children have to each other. Again, this will be done in a manner that is practical.
- c. Only one learner may sit at a desk. A learner will be assigned to a specific place in the classroom and may not move places unless instructed by the teacher to do so.
- d. Desks will be placed no closer than 1 meter from each other.
- e. The sharing of stationery, textbooks or other stationery may not take place. Each child MUST have their own stationery at school.

### **4. SOCIAL DISTANCING:**

- a. Children must stay at least 1.5m apart from each other.
- b. This rule will apply both while in class as well when on break.
- c. Games, like soccer or other activities, unfortunately, cannot be played during break times.

### **5. TUCKSHOP**

- a. The tuckshop will be allowed to open.
- b. The operators will be expected to comply with all the safety requirements detailed within this newsletter.
- c. In addition to this, they will be required to wear disposable gloves that must be discarded between each food preparation process.
- d. Tuckshop operators must also sanitize their hands before and after working with food and ensure that hair nets and face masks are worn at all times.
- e. One learner at a time may only collect food from the tuckshop. When queuing at the tuckshop, a space of 1.5m must be left between each learner.

### **6. COMPUTER CENTRE(S)**

- a. As learners enter the computer labs, they are required to sanitize their hands.
- b. Once the hands have been sanitized, each learner will be given a paper towel which will have sanitizer applied to it. The learner will then wipe down the keyboard with the sanitizer and dispose of the paper towel into the plastic bag at the dustbin.
- c. After completing their work, the learner will sanitize their hands before leaving the computer lab.
- d. A computer must be left unused between each child.
- e. No more than 12 learners in the computer lab at any one time.

### **7. CLASS AND SCHOOL LIBRARIES**

- a. Children may borrow books from the class or school library.
- b. When a book is returned, it must be placed in the "Quarantine" box where the book must remain, untouched, for one week.

- c. Once the period of one week has passed, or the weekly “fogger” has been applied to the venue, the book will only then be deemed safe to be returned to the library for reissue.

## **8. PARENTS VISITING THE OFFICE OR STAFF MEMBERS**

- a. The first preference is for parents to set up a Zoom/Skype/Google Meet meeting with the staff member concerned.
- b. If a parent must physically come to the school, then the parent is required to wear a face mask and have their hands sanitized on entry to the school.
- c. During the course of the meeting, a distance of at least 1.5m must be observed at all times.
- d. If a parent wants to pay school fees, the first preference is for the parent to deposit the fees at the bank or make payment by EFT. If a credit/debit card payment needs to be made, the school will allow parents to swipe the card but then parents must sanitize hands before swiping and after swiping the card.
- e. All visitors to the school are required to complete the “Visitors register” so if we need to perform tracing, we have a contact number to reach the visitor.

## **9. A CHILD WHO IS ILL**

- a. If a child has any common cold, the flu or is unwell, we request that the child is kept at home as a precaution. It is recommended that parents then seek assistance through the screening process to rule out Covid-19.
- b. While the school generally does not want children to miss school for small issues, under the current circumstance, we would prefer children who are not well to remain at home until they are well.
- c. If any parent or learner is identified as being positive for Covid-19, we request that you inform the school immediately of such identification. This is critical so that we can immediately trace all contacts and take the necessary measures to contain the spread of the virus
- d. A child or staff member who is identified as being positive for Covid-19 is required to remain in self-isolation until tests confirm that they are no longer positive. Only then will such a person be allowed to return to school.
- e. Under no circumstances will a person who is tested positive for Covid-19 be stigmatized. To ensure confidentiality, I strongly recommend that such information is only provided to the principal of the relevant school who will ensure that such information is held in the strictest of confidence.

## **10. MARKING OF BOOKS AND TESTS**

- a. Covid-19 can remain active while on surfaces. As such, children will have to engage and be trained to perform self-marking of books.
- b. Under certain circumstances, teachers will have to mark tests, especially when it comes to Grade 12 SBA assessments.
  - i. During these times, learners will have to sanitize their hands before writing the test.
  - ii. After the test is written, the invigilator will collect the papers and band them together with an elastic band.
  - iii. The invigilator will then sanitize their hands.
  - iv. If the papers can wait for a week before they are marked, that will allow for any virus to die that may be present on the papers.

- v. If the papers have to be marked urgently, the papers may be put through a fogger process. Alternatively, the staff member can mark using disposable gloves and then ensure that they sanitize their hands post the marking process.

## 11. ONLINE TEACHING

- a. Staff will and may continue to use online teaching as a means to deliver lessons.
- b. Learners must be prepared to work online. As learners will be allowed at school on designated days, they will have access to WiFi at school in order to use the Internet to complete online work.
- c. Learners may NOT share mobile devices under any circumstances.

## 12. SANITIZATION OF THE SCHOOL

- a. In addition to the measures listed above, the school will apply a fogger sanitizer to each of the spaces where people meet or gather. This will be done on a weekly basis. This fogger is designed to kill the covid-19 virus
- b. Cleaning staff will make sure that all waste material is disposed of into plastic bags at the end of each day. These bags will be sealed and disposed of through our regular refuse collection.
- c. Other deep cleaning measures will be put into place to ensure that the school remains a safe environment to all.

While there is bound to be some areas that I will probably need to add to this list, I feel that we have put sufficient planning to protect the lives of our community. We call on our parents, caregivers and learners to please follow the procedures outlined above so that we can protect the lives of all in our community.

At this stage no definite date has been set yet for the reopening of schools. I will be communicating with our parents, as soon as we have solid information. We are expected to hear from our Minister for Basic Education later today. Once we have clarity, we will send through the plan of dates for staged return to classes.

Yours sincerely



**Mr B Harris**  
**Executive Headmaster**



**Mrs R Pretorius**  
**Principal: Rand Preparatory**