



26 July / Julie 2021

Dear Parents

Thank you to the parent who shared the following with us:

“Life is the most difficult question paper you will ever write. So many people fail because they look at other people’s answers. They do not realise that we each write our own question paper.”

Since the start of the pandemic we chose honesty and truth as the way forward. We communicated relevant information, what and when we could. We never knowingly compromised our learners and staff and kept to our decisions irrespectively. Our deepest condolences to learners who lost parents during the holidays as well as mothers and fathers who have lost a loved one or family member. You are all in our prayers - we also pray for Sunridge family members still fighting for their lives.

Academically: we are one of the few privileged schools, with tremendous support from parents, who ensured our children lost the bare minimum. We keep on delivering academics on the same level; presenting it differently and more creatively. We are proud of successes and acknowledge mistakes BUT the bottom line is we prepared our children academically, as close as humanly possible, to the normal Sunridge standard. The fact that parents are way more involved now underlines the gaps which sometimes were missed by parents due to their normal and busy lifestyle. This will be addressed and we are confident that we can deliver quality as always.

Physically: we acknowledge huge shortcomings, we tried to address these BUT sadly we had no control over the regulations. This proves to be a risk BUT a huge need to be addressed when and if possible. Sadly, some service providers continue with creative means to serve this need. We are well aware of different “social events” held for learners, not wearing masks as well as parents and staff socialising at these events and ignoring regulations. This is a risk we cannot control - may our actions never put the lives of others at risk.

Mentally: our children are doing well as teachers are more directly in contact per class. They are talking and sharing more than in the past and the comment in 2020 that our children were born to deal with this was spot on. We need to support them and acknowledge that they can cope and will do so better than most adults.

Health: our local medical advisors still recommend that we must keep the status quo and they are not yet convinced that it is feasible for all learners to return at once. The Department of Education has, however, instructed that we prepare to return to the traditional daily attendance timetable model on 2 August 2021.

Safety: our social distancing was always 1,5 meters and we never bent the rule, not even under pressure. 50% capacity was 50% and again we stuck to the rules. We will not bend to gain favour or to please. With the 1 meter for a full return now pushed on us we acknowledge it BUT will not be bullied into it without proper consultation and ensuring we can maintain it properly.

Full Return

We can confirm that Governing Body Associations/ Federations, Teacher Unions and the Department of Health support this full return BUT we also know that not all schools will be able to return in full as compliance will be a huge challenge.

We will not be drawn into the comparison between schools or argue their compliance or not. We have done all we can and are ready to phase the 100% return in if we are satisfied that regulations can be adhered to.

We now have a bit more time to consult with you as parents and we kindly ask you to again study the previous information letter, earlier newsletters and this one before you answer the questions on the questionnaire we are sending out today. Uplifting comments or positive input can be sent to info@sunridge.co.za.

Should we, on whatever grounds, decide to implement the full return we will need three days to prepare classes, move furniture, set up all logistical measures, do training and deep clean the school before receiving all learners back.

We decided that this Friday, Saturday and Sunday would be utilized as it will require the minimum loss of contact time. We will obtain permission, in writing, from the Department to close the school on Friday and all staff will be required to help with the process.

We will also have an independent inspection to confirm that we comply before we open in full on Monday.

We are in compliance with the current measures and passed our independent inspection. **We will keep to the daily rotational timetable model until further notice.**

We can confirm the following on our readiness to open in full:

In reaction to the announcement on Saturday by the Minister of Education: We still await guidance on matters as in our newsletter of last week and hope that we can get answers in writing. We did not receive any PPE's from the Department of Education

this year and still await our 2020 PPE's. We did not receive any thermometers nor any compensation for SGB teachers or any others posts. The school budget is carrying the cost.

- We can only ensure 1 meter between learners in class, as in the SOP guidelines of the Department of Education.
- Our school will return 100% BUT no classroom/ venue will exceed a 66% capacity. Currently the SOP is silent on the capacity of classrooms/ venues at schools.
- We will stagger break times and weather permitting learners will be allowed to eat lunch (15 minutes as prescribed) outside on the sport fields with a 1.5 meter social distancing. This will also be the recommended mask break.
- We will still allow brain breaks and/ or walks as needed at the discretion of the teacher.
- No running or any activities during the 15 minute break.
- Learners will stay in their classes and will only move outside for controlled physical education.
- All other subjects will be presented in class.
- Music theory will be before school in the old staff room.
- Individual music learners will be fetched and taken back to class by the music teacher.
- Children can be dropped off from 07:15 and go immediately to class.
- School will start at 08:00 sharp and we will not entertain late arrivals (you need to phone the school in the case of an emergency).
- Learners will not be able to be fetched early and all appointments must be scheduled for the afternoon.
- We will stagger the fetching of learners to support traffic. We will not provide any aftercare services and parents must fetch all learners within 30 minutes of school closure.
- The pickup traffic will increase 100% and it will take more time and patience while learners will still be required to comply with 1,5 meter social distancing. This will be a challenge.
- Grade 1 go home at 13:00
- Grade 2 go home at 13:15
- Grade 3 and 4 will go home at 13:30
- Grade 5, 6 and 7 go home at 14:00

Although we tolerate non-compliance, children will be children, we will have to act more decisively if learners fail to comply. A full return might be academically more feasible but will ask a lot more from learners, teachers and parents.

The following questions will be sent via a link.

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| 1. I have consulted the newsletters | YES / NO |
| 2. I am in favour of a full return to school | YES / NO |
| 3. I am aware that the Department of Education has published the regulations in the Gazette and guidelines in the SOP | YES / NO |
| 4. I agree that my child may return to school full time | YES / NO |

This will assist us to make an informed decision. The deadline for the return of your answers will be 10:00 on Tuesday, 27 July 2021.

Due to time constraints this letter will only go out in English

Sunshine greetings
MAURITZ DE VRIES
Principal

