

**ABOUT BELLAVISTA SCHOOL**

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*"Deep within (each child) lies a seed of greatness waiting to be germinated."*

*Dr. M.E. Munroe*

## **The Past:**

Bellavista School had the seeds for its growth planted in 1966 by two fathers whose sons were not making progress in regular schools and were rapidly losing their self confidence, their self esteem and their interest in school.

These gentlemen, Mr J. Blankfield and Mr L. Yorke formed a committee along with Shirley Cohen, an educational Psychologist and Mr Griffith, a retired school inspector. They decided to establish a non profit making school for children experiencing learning difficulties. The school opened in 1967 in a beautiful house in Parktown and moved to its present Birdhaven property in September 1969 in order to expand the school to provide remedial assistance for more learning disabled children. Even to this present day, the number of children requiring intensive remedial assistance far outnumber availability of places in remedial schools.

The development of Bellavista School over the years has been directly related to the foresight, knowledge and enthusiasm of the Board of Governors, the active Parents Association and committed school principals, who have been instrumental in raising funds to enable the school to develop its facilities.

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## **The Vision**

“A view to a brighter future”

## **The Mission**

To deliver excellence in education to children who experience barriers to learning and to equip them with life skills enabling them to embrace their future.

We believe that every child has strengths and weaknesses. We aim to encapsulate their strengths and promote these, whilst helping the child develop coping strategies for his/her areas of weakness. The ultimate aim is that each child reaches his/her full potential. As each child's background and learning potential is unique, the time needed to spend within this environment will depend upon each individual.

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**Bellavista comprises of Bellavista School, Bellavista S.E.E.K. and Bellavista S.H.A.R.E.**

## **More about Bellavista School**

Bellavista School is a multi-cultural, co-educational, independent remedial school catering for approximately 200 learners from Grade R to Grade 7. The school is centrally situated in Johannesburg, Gauteng. It is a Non-Profit Organisation with a PBO status. Bellavista is a member of The Independent School Association of Southern Africa, The British Dyslexia Association, The International Dyslexia Association and SAALED (South African Association for Learners with Educational Differences). The well-established Assessment Centre, Bellavista S.E.E.K. is registered with the Board of Health Funders and has a practice number as a child development clinic. The school is nearing its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday and celebrates a legacy of excellent delivery over the

decades. Past learners of the school continue to call in and drop word of their progress and success later in life.

Bellavista was founded with the purpose of delivering the curriculum to learners with barriers to learning that prohibits them from participating in mainstream education systems. It is a co-educational school from (ages 5 to 14) that attempts to offer:

- intervention to remediate difficulties;
- excellence to deliver to the child the best possible schooling available;
- whole family support;
- an inclusive, multi-cultural environment that prepares children for the long-term world of work and a meaningful place in society.

Bellavista School is situated in the suburb of Birdhaven and caters for children from Johannesburg, Sandton and the North, South, East and West Rand. The school comprises of learners drawn from a broad demographic region across Gauteng. Learners travel from the East and West Rand, Sandton, Randburg, Alberton and Soweto to receive the support they need. The school has an open admissions policy and will, when suitable placement opens up, accommodate all learners who have been identified as having learning potential but are presenting with barriers to learning that make mainstream schooling prohibitive at that time.

The full staff complement sustains a ratio of 4:1 - learner: professional staff member. Each learner is allocated an inter-disciplinary team to assess, monitor and devise intervention programmes. The team might include a Speech Therapist, an Occupational Therapist, a Psychologist, a Remedial Therapist and an experienced teacher. Because the school believes in the whole child, sports coaches and facilitators as well as specialist teachers are also employed by the school. The school's budget is substantially loaded towards salaries and a small portion only to other basic operational overheads so as to afford the learners the maximum attention possible. Staff members are highly trained and/or experienced, skilled professionals who have a deep-seated motivation to see and reach the potential in every child. Bellavista invests considerably in staff development and training and each professional member is encouraged to journey as lifelong learners. Staff turnover is minimal.

The curriculum course we follow follows the Department of Education's National Curriculum Statement and is aligned with its associated CAPS documents. In addition, Bellavista School emphasizes the development of cognitive thinking skills, shared problem solving and co-operative learning groups and efficient study methods. Hence, the curriculum is suitably enriched. Our learning programme incorporates specific remedial approaches as well as Speech and Language, Occupational and Psychological therapies. Design and Technology (including Robotics), Art, Computer Literacy, Digital Literacy, coding and entrepreneurial skills are considered important to equip the children with life skills for the future.

Bellavista offers a wide range of outdoor extramural activities such as Soccer, Cricket, Netball, Archery and Cross Country with competitive participation. The children also enjoy Volleyball, Tennis, Softball, Rock Climbing (when interest arises), Athletics, Chess (when interest arises), Arts and Craft, Music and Robotics. Drama provides for the more culturally orientated child. The children perform in assemblies, music festivals and talent shows each year and every second year

the whole school is involved in a full musical and drama production.

Outings to theatres and visits by travelling thespians are encouraged. School trips develop the exploration of ecological issues whilst the opportunity for teamwork, friendship building and the fostering of self responsibility is enjoyed by all. Visits to venues of an educational nature complement and reinforce classroom teaching.

Recognition through points and credit badges, 'High Five' awards, special certificates of merit and the awarding of colours is granted to every child thought to have made extra effort and to have given of their best at all times. Positive behaviours are encouraged and reinforced.

Bellavista provides outstanding preparation for children to mainstream after leaving Bellavista as balanced, happy, responsible, independent and coping young people.

### **More about Bellavista S.H.A.R.E.**

Our wealth lies in our professional knowledge, experience and collective expertise. The Board of Governors and the school's executive staff committed to release this resource to the broader educational landscape and launched the Bellavista Educational Resource Centre. We named it Bellavista S.H.A.R.E., an acronym for: *"Share what we know; Help where we can; Advise and assist; Resource and equip; Educate others"*. With that launch, the school harnessed the collective capacity it holds within its own staff to improve the quality of educational delivery, particularly in the area of literacy, to approximately 7 000 disadvantaged learners by developing therapists and educators working with them in their respective professional designations. A critical strategy for the school has been to develop public-private partnerships and, as such, we have collaborated with key, senior decision makers at a provincial and national level, as well as tertiary institutions, to ensure an effective intervention.

Bellavista's established reputation for excellence and the consistent feedback about the success of past learners testifies to our delivery and our passion for children, some who will mainstream and others who might not, but who will still find a meaningful place in society. We are compelled to share our knowledge and insights and thus be part of filling the educational void in our country.



Bellavista feels a responsibility and duty to share recent information and research on learning difficulties with a wider community. To this end, the school incorporates the Bellavista S.H.A.R.E. project wherein the professional staff are involved in workshops where assessment tools, new approaches to teaching reading and spelling as well as techniques to develop emotional intelligence, cognitive strategies, thinking skills, study skills, auditory processing and sensory integration are shared with educators from both public and independent schools. In addition, information evenings are held regularly throughout the year when guest speakers address parents, educators and therapists on topics and issues which impact on learning, for example: depression, attention deficit disorder, sleep disturbance, equine therapy and the impact of divorce.

Bellavista S.H.A.R.E. is responsible for hosting evening talks for parents, educators and therapists on a number of topics. These events are advertised in the school's weekly newsletter, on social media and via a subscribed database. Parents are welcome to attend. In addition, this busy professional development provider develops training courses for schools and educators as the need arises.

***Specific Bellavista S.H.A.R.E. initiatives include:***

**Continuous Professional Development Award in Dyslexia and Literacy**

South Africa's education system is in an ongoing state of crisis. There is a gross under provision of specialised teacher training, especially in the area of special needs education. In keeping with the practices and philosophy of Inclusive Education, outlined in the White Paper 6 of 2001, and The DoE Guidelines for Full Service/ Inclusive Schools 2009, special needs schools will need to become vital resource centres if we are to offer equal access to all learners and to all schools in the next decade. Around the country, teachers are crying out for quality in-service training that equips them with practical skills, academic understanding and professional accreditation. Bellavista School, with its well qualified and professional team, is well positioned to answer this need. At the start of 2011, Bellavista School launched a specific training programme dealing with Dyslexia and literacy. The training equips in-service teachers and allied professionals to be that 'one trained specialist' in Dyslexia, in every Gauteng school and beyond. At present, more than 3000 persons and organisations are registered on our database following attendance at our various training courses. Our most recent event was a ground breaking conference held for high school and university educators in February 2014. An impressive line-up of speakers was

anchored by Dr Tilly Mortimore, an advisor in the United Kingdom. The conference was the first in facilitating focussed dialogue about Dyslexia issues across all sectors and looks to be a first of many.

The College has trained in excess of 70 post graduate professionals, including members of its own staff. Beyond training others, the College contributes to research in theory and practice around the subject of Dyslexia and has already attracted world leaders in the field to associate themselves with us. This includes professors and practitioners from the University of BathSpa in the United Kingdom, The University of Johannesburg in South Africa, The University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa, and Tufts University in Boston, USA. The course, proudly developed by Bellavista, receives a Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) credit towards an Honours degree in Inclusive Education at WITS. Students from Botswana and Swaziland have been referred to us by consultants abroad. The students enrolled in the course are largely self-funded. With specific contribution from the Resilient Fortress Fund, we have had the privileged opportunity to extend enrolment placements to teachers in underprivileged schools. The course has been accredited by the HPCSA (Health Professionals Council of South Africa) with 30 CEUs, the full complement of professional development points required by a health practitioner per annum. This year, SACE (South African Council of Educators) awarded our course 40 CDP points. Our work is known by SAQA who are supporting us in preparation for registration as a Professional Body. It is through this vehicle that we intend influencing the national qualification framework in such a way that educators can be systematically trained to support learners with barriers to learning.

### **RAVE-O training, research and adaptation to suit the South African learner**

RAVE-O is the only evidence based reading programme that can supply sustained clinical research about its positive effect. In 2008, delegates from Bellavista travelled to Tufts University in Boston, USA to make investigation. After participating in a research project in our school with our weakest readers, and seeing its positive effect, Bellavista has facilitated an annual visit to South Africa by Prof Stephanie Gottwald, the senior researcher and trainer in the programme. The national demand for training has extended this training offering to three sets of three day training workshops each year. Further, we have established direct mentor relationships in six underprivileged environments. Through regular onsite visits, frequent training inputs and continuous support, Bellavista is reaching more than 30 times its own number. We have sourced funding for resource adaptation to make the literacy programme accessible to second language English learners and, further, funding for equipment that the schools need. More than 52 government school educators and district learner support officials have received direct, intensive training on our property, by our staff and international guests. Six public schools have been involved in the RAVE-O Project, notably Denver Primary (a mainstream, quintile 1 school), Drake Koka Primary School, Bertrams Junior School, HA Jack Primary School Nokuthula and Forest Town special schools. These schools were identified by the Gauteng Provincial Education Department. Further, Bellavista has been welcomed by Bertrams Junior School, Drake Koka Primary School and HA Jack Primary School where visionary staff members see the relevance of the RAVE-O reading intervention.

*A bit about these schools:*

**Denver Primary** is a quintile one school, with an average class size of 45 learners: 1 teacher. English is the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) in all classrooms, with substantial code switching. Eleven teachers across grade one to three were supported to implement the

programme. The 12<sup>th</sup> individual trained was the principal, and she provided overall leadership for implementation.

**Nokuthula Special School** in Marlborough; and **Forest Town Special Needs School** in Forest Town have English as the language of teaching and learning in their classes. The average class size is 16: 1. Thirteen teachers and two therapists were trained with us. The learners in these schools are profoundly disabled. Imagine the excitement as they begin to read!

**HA Jack Primary School** is a former “Model C” school in Orange Grove. A lone ‘champion’ teacher trained on our Award in Dyslexia and Literacy in 2011 and has been using the RAVE-O literacy programme in her class, bringing staffroom interest as her children succeeded in literacy. Last year, her visionary principal invited Bellavista to extend training to a broader staff cohort and welcomed ongoing mentorship in the school’s Foundation Phase. The learners are from disadvantaged and lower income families.

Bellavista has long supported **Bertrams Junior School** in Bertrams, Johannesburg. It was a natural extension to involve the staff there in the more intense RAVE-O mentorship. This small school serves more than 400 learners between the ages of 6 and 10 years old, largely of foreign nationality, who reside in the Berea/ Bez Valley area.

**Drake Koka** is a state school of 1 600 learners in Ivory Park from many different mother-tongue languages and a largely informal settlement area. The staff identified RAVE-O as an imperative after attending, at the bequest of their principal [who trained with Bellavista a decade back], a Q & A panel held at Bellavista School with Dr Wolf last February.

Dr Wolf is the researcher of RAVE-O, a neuroscientist holding chairs at Harvard University and TUFTS University, Boston, and works in strong collaboration with MIT. Those who know the names of these institutions will know that they are Ivy League level, renowned for academic excellence, gold standard research and cutting edge innovation. Compliment from this source is treasured indeed. Dr Wolf developed and holds the intellectual property of the RAVE-O programme for literacy that we have implemented, adapted and researched ourselves. She saw a South African interpretation of her work here at our school, and was visibly moved by the effect on our children and the extension of her thinking she saw in action. Maryanne Wolf is deeply invested in reaching the 100 000 000 children believed to be unschooled worldwide. She came with us to the Department of Education to vouch for our modelling as a start to a local solution to illiteracy that extends way beyond our community, but through which we can share our professional insights to make a difference at large. Her willingness to put her name behind our initiative in this regard was an expression of trust hard earned through visible evidence of our effectiveness in our classrooms. Her very words in a follow up letter were: “*Bellavista has to be one of the best schools on the continent.*” Bellavista wants to share this excellence.

**More about Bellavista S.E.E.K.**



Bellavista S.E.E.K. is an integral part Bellavista School's vision. It falls under the auspices of the school who engages experienced and insightful professionals with many years experience in education, remedial education and children with special needs. Bellavista S.E.E.K. has a number of experienced psychologists and therapists who make up the teams that conduct assessments for children both nationally and internationally. These full assessments provide the necessary diagnostic framework needed to support children either in the current school environment and those who will come into Bellavista School.

Parents are welcome to contact the school during office hours for any additional information they might require: 011 788 5454 or [assessment@bellavistaschool.co.za](mailto:assessment@bellavistaschool.co.za)

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### **The Present:**

The Board of Governors originally leased the land Bellavista is currently situated on. The Local Government sold the school the land in 2005. On this land, stakeholders at Bellavista truly attempt to create a legacy for future generations of children who have learning potential but who struggle to fulfil this potential within the mainstream school. The school built a two storey school to create more spacious classrooms extending onto covered patios as well as building more and larger therapy rooms to allow for comfortable individual and small group therapies. The junior phase classrooms from Grade R – 3 are situated on the ground floor, with the necessary storerooms and ablutions. Large play therapy rooms have been built along with Psychologists' consultancy rooms. The Grade Rs and 1s share the playground leading off from their classrooms onto a sensory garden with jungle gyms, cycle tracks and sandpit. The therapy department is situated above the Junior Department comprising of therapy rooms for the Occupational Therapists, Speech-Language Therapists and Remedial Therapists. In between the Junior and Senior Phases are lovely, quaint courtyards for children to sit in and are utilised for their leisure or the more tranquil activities. The children, parents and staff all lovingly tend the gardens about the property. The Intermediate and Senior Phases comprise of spacious Grade Four to Seven classrooms. Rooms for Music, Drama, Science, Digital Literacy, Art and Design & Technology rooms are situated in this area for the use of the whole school, with tuition given by the specialist teachers in their fields. Above these is a user friendly multimedia centre, comprising of an interleading library and computer centre with interactive technology facilities as well as the 'Corner Room' that houses our



iPad lab. A lift has been installed in the 'clock tower' at the entrance to the Junior and Senior Phases respectively to facilitate movement for children/adults with disabilities.

In our day-to-day operation, we strive to make a meaningful difference to the lives of children with learning and other disabilities that may make mainstream education prohibitive for them.

## **Board of Governors**

Bellavista School registered as a Section Twenty One Association Not for Gain and is governed by the Articles of Association currently being revised as a Memorandum of Incorporation. It is registered as an *Independent School* with the Gauteng Department of Education and is a member of The Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA).

Bellavista School is governed by a Board of Governors comprising parents past and present. The members of the Board freely and generously give of their time and expertise, offering sound governance, legislative compliance advice and prudent financial management of the school's affairs. The Board guards the ethos of the school and ensures its past and future legacy.

The Board of Governors is elected from the past and present parent body and persons involved in specialised fields of education and financial management. The duties and responsibilities of the Board are to appoint the Principal, to manage the school finances, maintain the school property and assets, develop and oversee policies and procedures and to regularly appraise the progress and direction of Bellavista School, Bellavista S.H.A.R.E. and Bellavista SEEK.

## **Bellavista School Parent Association**

The Parents' Association is a group of interested parents who plan and run both fun and fund raising events on behalf of the school. For many of us, coming to Bellavista has not been out of choice, but out of necessity. Possibly, for this reason, parents are often reluctant to become too involved in the school, hoping that the placement of their child is only temporary. Such thinking may deprive you and your child of much that Bellavista has to offer. By becoming involved in the school, parents not only support their child, but each other. Problems, doubts and fears that we may think are unique to our situation are suddenly shared and seen from a new perspective.

There are many levels of involvement, from giving time to the tuck shop, helping with social or fund raising events, becoming a class parent, attending PA meetings or contributing financially. In 2001 the Bellavista Board of Governors suggested a levy per family per term. The parents agreed on the adoption of the levy. Funds raised are used to upgrade the facilities at the school.

Social events are at the heart of the School. They offer parents the opportunity to get to know one another. It is felt that at least one such event should be held each term. The 'Bellavista Bash' and 'Bingo Evening' are examples of such events. In addition to social events, a few fund raisers also take place. We limit these to one per term, unless circumstances arise where there may be a requirement for additional funds.

The PA is responsible for a number of portfolios at the school, namely the 50/50 Club, Tuck Shop,

Uniform Shop, MySchool cards, catering, fund raising, social events, class parent co-ordination etc. These activities form an integral part of the school. All parents are encouraged to become part of Bellavista and, by doing so, will assist their child in reaching his or her full potential.

*“Do not let the precious time that you spend here pass you by!”*

### **The PA of 2015 launched the “Power of One Campaign” which is ongoing**



*Bellavista is a most amazing remedial school whose success can be attributed to the initiative and enthusiasm of its founders, board, Parents Association and committed school principals.*

*Bellavista is more than a school, it is a partnership of learners, teachers and parents who hand-in-hand embark on a journey of transformation, to ensure its learners get the best possible start on their journey to a brighter future.*

*The DNA of Bellavista is all about **community** – sharing, helping, advising, equipping. The school is only one part of the partnership which is dedicated to making things happen- with an expectation that parents also need to step up to the plate.*

*Getting parents involved in contributing to this community can however can be a challenge, as many work, some are disinterested, then there are the timid, the self-entitled, and those that feel they have made their contribution by paying huge school fees. All parents are busy, some more so than others, but it doesn't mean we can't all be doing just one thing, that can make a difference to Bellavista.*

#### **Rationale behind campaign**

- It all starts with one spark to get a fire going;
- small steps all add up to big results, like the story of the little boy that picked up one starfish and threw it into the sea;
- The rationale of “1” is that it seems nominal, insignificant, easy to commit to – it is like the person on the side of the road, asking for R1,00;
- parents need to feel that in their own small way they can assist the school immensely - if everyone helps a little bit, it makes the load easier to share;
- all families work because there is a give and take. We would like every member within the Bellavista family to buy into that – be it in time, money, contacts, prizes, referrals, access to trade discounts, information, ideas, talents;
- people can feel overwhelmed when asked to participate, particularly when it encroaches on their time and finances. This campaign should aim at making everyone feel that there are other ways and means that they can be active in the success of the school;
- people who are able to commit to something small are often the ones who will come onboard with other bigger things (foot-in-the door approach).

#### **Primary aim of the campaign**

- to install a sense of community

- to get active buy-in from every family as part of the Bellavista family once a term – be it through the established activities, such as spending an hour covering books, or by initiating a useful contact for the Tuck shop
- to get parents to offer their talents to the school, beyond the ‘formal’ PA events and programmes – this could be in the form of referrals for sponsorship, prizes that are gathering dust in the cupboard, the use of their domestic staff to assist at events with build-up or clean-up, pro bono financial, legal, skills development, discounted rates for printing or offering free access to company venues for Bellavista events

### **Secondary aim**

- to teach the children at Bellavista that success can be achieved through small, but dedicated steps
- no man is an island and that working together is necessary for the common good of a community

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### **Principal and Staff**

Bellavista School assumes a holistic approach to each child’s development. This is embodied in the Principal’s broad view of education, which is based on many years of experience, sound educational values and a determination to manage a team that will assist each child to fulfil his/her potential and review their development in the light of current and ongoing changes in education in order to maximise their progress.

The parent-school partnership is facilitated through the staff’s ‘open door’ policy with parents and children. It is achieved by ensuring a multi-disciplinary approach to the education of the child through the vehicle of an interdisciplinary team.

The inter-disciplinary team comprises of the Teachers, Remedial, Speech-Language and Occupational Therapists, as well as Psychologists, who together liaise with the principal and case conference on a regular basis, to ensure the needs of the child are being met. Communication with specialists in the medical field external to the school is maintained as well.

The class teacher and respective therapists meet with the parents twice termly, once at an informal meeting on open afternoon and again for a formal parent evening each term for feedback on the child’s progress and discussion revolves around the term’s written report. These meetings afford the parents an opportunity to discuss any concerns or recommendations they may have. They are in addition to the continuous interaction between professionals and parents throughout the year.

Termly, there is a comprehensive report from the class teacher and, annually, a progress report or assessment from the therapists.

### **Staff development**

All staff members are afforded the opportunity to develop their skills further in the form of short courses as well as more extensive study. The academic staff are continuously reviewing their educational needs to keep abreast of changes in education and thereby provide meaningful intervention for each child.

Specialist teachers are employed for Design and Technology, Art, Music, Computers, Afrikaans and Phys Ed / Sport, to address the children's cultural, sporting and technological skills. These educators form an integral part of the staff complement. Children from Grade R - 7 participate in these activities and receive tuition at specific times of the week in Design and Technology, Computers, Music and Physical Education.

The smooth running of the school is undertaken by an efficient administrative staff consisting of the Principal's Personal Assistant, the Front Office Manager, the Receptionist, the Bursar, the Caretaker, the Bellavista SHARE administrator and the Bellavista SEEK Secretary, each of whom can be contacted with regard to the following aspects:-

The school has in its employ several support staff who are responsible for maintenance of the grounds and buildings.

You can put names to faces and get an email contact for each staff member via [www.bellavista.org.za/staff](http://www.bellavista.org.za/staff)

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### **School grades and phases**

Bellavista has three phases within the school:

The Foundation Phase	-	Grade R + Grade 1 - 3
The Intermediate Phase	-	Grades 4 - 6
The Senior Phase	-	Grade 7

The daily running of the school is conducted by a leadership team consisting of the School Principal, two Deputy Principals, a Foundation Head of Department, a Senior/Intermediate Head of Department, Heads of Department in OT and Speech Therapy and an IT Manager.

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### **RECEPTION YEAR**

The Grade R class was established in 1996 when it was identified that there was a growing need to assist children with their development prior to entering the more formalised education of the primary school years. Technically, Grade R forms part of the Foundation Phase.

The children are required to have a full psycho-educational assessment to determine the optimal placement for them. Once it is agreed that the child would benefit from a remedial school environment, the parents are notified. Following an application to the school, they then have an interview with the Principal and are provided with the relevant admissions data.

To give the children an opportunity to become familiar with the school and the people therein, they are invited to a New Children's Party in the October/ November preceding their year of entry. If children are enrolled during the course of the year, we will carefully handle their orientation and familiarisation to the school according to their needs.

There are 12 children in the Grade R class, each of whom receive weekly therapy from the Speech and Language and Occupational Therapists allocated to their class. Of key importance is that the therapists observe whether the child is able to generalise the skills he/she has been introduced to in a one on one situation. As such, the therapists move freely in and out of the classroom. Additional play therapy is provided within the school if the needs are identified.

Speech-Language Therapy addresses all aspects of language, articulation and auditory processing as well as additional sensory integration programmes.

The Occupational Therapist focuses on fine and gross motor co-ordination, the full spectrum of visual perceptual skills as well as sensory integration therapy to address the child's development.

The Grade R curriculum is an integrated one which focuses on school readiness and addresses all underlying aspects of language, literacy, Mathematics, visual and auditory perception, gross and fine motor co-ordination, cognitive, social and emotional development.

The teaching approach is multi-faceted to encourage the child to explore and derive meaning from his/her environment in an experiential and enriching way. It will allow for the child's individual development, maximising his/her strengths and providing support in areas of difficulty.

The Bright Start Cognitive Development, Matal and Cognitive Enrichment Advantage programmes are all used to develop the child's ability to think independently and to equip him/her with strategies that can be used in a variety of settings. The use of the aforementioned have been found to stimulate independence, develop self confidence and a sense of self worth and well being; consequently creating a happy and relaxed atmosphere, wherein the child feels valued. Parental involvement is encouraged.

Activities parallel to those being addressed at school are provided to expose the child to learning in as many informal situations as possible.

The Grade Rs participate in Physical Education and Music lessons each week, as well having one half hour lesson with the computer teacher, accompanied by the therapists once weekly. These events are anticipated with much excitement! The Grade Rs have participated in Playball each year one day per week on agreement with the parents. This activity is funded by participating parents separately. Other than this, no extramural activities are available for the Grade Rs.

## **THE FOUNDATION PHASE**

Bellavista's Foundation Phase is a very special and unique one. The learners from Grade One to Grade Three are referred to the school because they have learning difficulties.

The focus in this phase is to teach the learners the necessary skills to help them approach their learning difficulties. This is done with the help of a multi-disciplinary team consisting of the class teacher, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, remedial therapists and psychologists.

Our learner to teacher ratio is favourable enabling us to give the learners unique, individual

attention depending on the needs of the child. We endeavour to remediate their difficulties but, moreover, emphasis is placed on building their self esteem in a loving and nurturing environment.

Bellavista School subscribes to an integrated, holistic approach to learning. We encourage our children to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and values which will in the future enable them to become competent, happy and productive citizens.

We use a child centred approach where learners learn by being exposed to a wide variety of stimulating themes, approaches and techniques; guided and facilitated by experienced and competent educators.

In the Foundation Phase we employ an 'best practice' approach to teaching and learning. The input to the children is steeped in the principles of cognitive education. This means we mediate skills to ensure that children can 'do' and not just 'know'. We emphasise Literacy (English and Afrikaans), Mathematics and include Life Skills. We integrate all learning areas around a theme.

We at Bellavista accept that:

- \* the first years at school lay the foundation for all learning experiences that follow;
- \* learners grow and acquire knowledge and skills at different rates;
- \* the children should be provided with the opportunity to move through all the different levels at a rate that will ensure optimal learning.

**Literacy Development:** To development of the learner's skills so that they can develop their English and use it correctly. The educator has a responsibility for fostering a positive attitude towards Literacy, which is achieved with good planning and teaching. We use an eclectic approach so that all learning styles can be accommodated. To promote competent reading levels in both accuracy and comprehension, we move from a 'Shared Reading' approach to Paired Reading. Grade Two and Three Guided Reading groups and engagement with the online Reading Eggs programme targets the needs of each child and differentiate lessons according to the child's level of development. THRASS provides us with the phonics instruction framework through the phase. RAVE-O is facilitated in class.

**Mathematics Development:** The learners acquire key skills in Mathematics through the problem solving approach which encompasses analytical thinking, critical thinking and the ability to reason quantitatively. Learners are given every opportunity to explore and determine the meaning of numerical values. Through a structured approach, learners move from a concrete representation of number to abstract levels of number manipulation. Differentiation is applied to meet the children at their point of understanding. Our curriculum is orientated around the Singapore Maths Programme.

**Life Skills Development and Instrumental Enrichment:** These are skills which help learners develop and understand their roles within the family, school and wider communities. This area mediates concepts about physical well being, emotional attitudes, sound norms, our environment, intellectual development, creative ability and core values.

**Afrikaans:** The second language taught at the school is Afrikaans, which begins on an oral level in Grade One. Use of stories, rhymes, songs and other approaches stimulate the children's interest in

this language as we prepare them for Grade Four. Our introduction of the phonetic system of the additional language is delayed in comparison to a mainstream school as we endeavour to get broad language structures intact before we build on them.

**Design and Technology:** As we live in a creative and technological age, children are taught Design and Technology from Grade One. Learners have to plan, design, make and evaluate models, products and structures using a problem solving approach.

**Information Technology:** Learners are taught how to use computers through their exposure to a wide range of software packages, promoting computer literacy, while covering diverse areas of their general education. The learners are subscribed to Reading Eggs to consolidate literacy skills in English using an online platform.

The Foundation Phase is an exciting stage in each child's development. It leads the child on a voyage of self discovery, securing solid foundations that hold the key to all future successes.

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## **THE INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR PHASE GRADES 4 – 6 and GRADE 7**

### **A lively, cognitive, co-operative learning experience!**

With the basics established in the Foundation Phase, it is time to extend each child's ability cognitively, academically, socially and emotionally. The Intermediate/Senior Phases (Grades 4, 5, 6 and 7) provide opportunity for exploration and personal growth. The learner is enthusiastic and welcomes new experiences. Identification with the group is important and interactions are exploratory, expressive and communicative.

**Our approach to learning** is fundamentally based on the development of cognitive thinking skills and strategies in order to equip each child to become independent learners rather than just learners of the content matter. Self motivation, confidence, respect for each other and discipline are all part of the developmental process and allow for greater understanding of subject matter and the development of social and life skills. Specific remedial approaches are designed to suit individual needs. Small classes allow for more personal attention.

**The core curriculum** incorporates the prescribed National CAPS curriculum with learning and is coupled with best practice. Innovative and effective teaching makes learning exciting. The subject matter is balanced and broadly based on life experiences and relevance to real life. English, Afrikaans, Mathematics, EMS (Gr7 only), Natural Science and Technology, Social Sciences (History and Geography), Digital Literacy, Computer Studies, Art, Music and Phys Ed. are taught in an integrated way and, where possible, the connections and inter-relationships between disciplines are revealed through a thematic approach. Modern co-operative learning and problem based methods are embraced, with learners being actively involved in the learning process.

**The English** lessons link and are developed thematically with language, creative writing, comprehension, spelling and oral work. A love of reading, literature and poetry is encouraged and all aspects of English i.e. reading, listening, writing, spelling, vocabulary extension and oral expression are improved through meaningful learning in a variety of literary experiences.

**Afrikaans** aims to develop confidence and fluency through listening, speaking, reading and writing. We aim to cover the basics and focus on developing learning strategies for the acquisition of additional languages. Learning a second language can be extremely challenging for a child with barriers to learning and we adopt a very 'child aligned' approach to delivery of the curriculum, making it relevant wherever we can.

**Mathematics** is both investigative and practical. Shared problem solving experiences, together with the development of skills and knowledge of basic mathematical facts, are regarded as equally important. Our curriculum is orientated around the Singapore Maths Programme.

**Economic Management Sciences** encourage entrepreneurial skills and knowledge of money and business. The subject is timetabled in the Grade Seven year. Grade Sevens participate in a 'Small Business Project' to allow them to experience business procedures first hand.

**Natural Science, History and Geography** come alive by examining theories, rules and beliefs, from different perspectives, testing them, and thus leading towards greater understanding. General knowledge is accessed and extended. Outings are an important component and are arranged wherever appropriate.

**Art (Gr4 – 7) and Class Music (Gr 4-6)** offer opportunities for the development of personal creative and artistic ability and cultural expression. We enjoy entering festivals such as the 'Magic of Music' at the Linder Auditorium.

**Technology** provides rich opportunities to improve lateral thinking, creativity, intuition and problem solving. It is a subject area that is highly esteemed and profiled in our school and includes Design and Technology as well as Computer Studies and Digital Literacy classes.

**Physical Education** completes a well balanced, holistic, school experience.

These are the years wherein each child's personal and individual development is paramount and each child is encouraged to discover his or her own individual talents and abilities. During this stage, each child will challenge existing values, explore, expand and consider various beliefs and world views. The road to self discovery may have a few jolts and unexpected deviations; however, it is an exciting and exhilarating journey.

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## PREPARATION FOR THE FUTURE

### Information and Computer Technology

Our computers are extensions to the classroom. They provide additional tools by which learners can come to learn and understand the varied aspects of their education. The whole area is known as ICT, Information and Communications Technology. Many learners bring their own assistive devices (e.g. laptops and tablets) to school to use across all classes. The skills are integrated across the curriculum.



In approaching work which is closely related to their class themes, learners acquire competence in the standard computer skills, generating files, and modifying, saving and printing files. The work might include:

- rote practice of Mathematics or language skills;
- text based creativity using word processing or desktop publishing programmes;
- image generation using a graphics programme;
- Practise in typing training and assistive software e.g. DRAGON SPEAK;
- Programming e.g. SCRATCH and TYNKER.

## **Design and Technology**

Our goal for Design and Technology is to develop effective thinkers; thinkers capable of generating and handling design appropriate for the modern and complex society in which we live; thinkers consciously striving to make our world better. The children attempt to master the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes relevant to Design and Technology. LEGO materials are used from Grade Four. Design and Technology helps develop entrepreneurial skills. The study of particular topics can lead to the development of future career paths such as engineering and mechanics.

Design and Technology encompasses the following:

- all the grades investigate structures, mechanisms and processing;
- when the programme is introduced to the learners it is linked to real life situations;
- this helps them to reflect on the impact and appropriateness of products;
- it includes observations, simulations and interviews;
- learners are given a number of resource tasks to empower them with knowledge; and skills to solve the given problem;
- the learners are expected to communicate the design process in the project portfolios;
- they will investigate, design, develop, evaluate, record and communicate;
- the older learners are expected to make a working drawing – 2D or 3D. Their projects are evaluated and assessments made regarding aspects such as effectiveness, appropriateness, the cost and aesthetics, as well as judgments of personal capability and enjoyment;
- the learners also enter competitions wherein they are expected to design and make different products; for companies. Their products and designs are taken into consideration when the panel is judging;
- Robotics from Grade Seven!

## **Art**

Our goal in Art is to expose the learners to as many different techniques as possible. The techniques range from basic sketching to perspective, digital engagement to 3D constructions. They are exposed to famous artists and their art works. The art is also an extension of what the class teachers are covering in the themes. We aim for the learners to enter a number of Art competitions throughout the year where appropriate. These range from designing advertisements to drawing and painting for an Eisteddfod. The Art Department strives to cover a large range of techniques and materials to prepare the learners for high school.

## **Cognitive Enrichment Advantage**

Bellavista School believes that thinking is a skill that can be taught just like reading or spelling. Learners don't always use thinking effectively and require strategies to make thinking more proficient. The strategies are covered formally in a programme called the Cognitive Enrichment Advantage (CEA) or Cognet (as it was formally known).

CEA is a cognitive educational programme developed by Professor K. Greenberg, USA. The goal is to teach learners to build their own mental schemata or mental framework for knowledge. Each learner develops personal learning strategies that will help them to cope with any learning experience, creating learners who are able to adapt to an ever changing world and think more flexibly. To gain the maximum impact for the learner, the school needs to establish partnership with the parents, as both parents and teachers play important roles as mediators within the child's life.

The programme helps the learner to examine and evaluate effective and inefficient thinking, and deals with the motivational and effective side to learning. Ultimately, the aim of the CEA programme is to create students who become effective, independent, lifelong learners. The school website is updated with the different Tools and Blocks we are covering at school and an info sticker is issued in the Agenda Books as we start a new strategy.

## **Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship is encouraged and stimulated at Bellavista School through a variety of approaches.

### *Class Tuck:*

Each class from Grade R to Grade 7 is provided with an opportunity to host a day each term, wherein the child is encouraged to bring edible items of his/her own choice to sell to the children of the other grades and staff at the school. The children buying are encouraged to handle their own money and make their own choices regarding what they purchase. In the junior grades, buying and selling of items is facilitated by allowing the children to purchase using coupons. The children enjoy the independence this affords them and can often be heard earnestly trading their wares. The proceeds of the sales go into the class's 'tuck fund' which is then used to purchase resources for the children or used to supplement special class projects or outings.

### *Grade 7 Business Project:*

The Grade Sevens embark on a business project every year to develop their entrepreneurial skills, which culminates with the winter market every alternate year. The children are encouraged to research possible business ventures which they can undertake within the constraints of a specified budget. The business project is run for the last 6 weeks of the second term or at the annual "Bellavista Bash" and is there to provide a broad knowledge base, stimulate creative thinking, elicit early entrepreneurial skills and develop a sense of business acumen. The whole affair is eagerly anticipated by all the other Grades. On completion, each project is reviewed. The profit earnings are apportioned three ways: to a charity of the learners' choice, to the school and to the learners themselves. The sense of achievement, level of independence and social interaction that takes place engenders a fulfilling experience for each learner, as his/her unique potential is recognised.

## **Music**

At Bellavista School, music provides students with a variety of activities and experiences.

The aims of the music lessons are that all students in a class group enjoy:

- vocalising through singing;
- instrumental playing, orff percussion, melodic and non melodic, as accompaniment and improvisation;
- active listening with non-melodic percussion. information about composer, history and orchestration of the chosen composition;
- dance and movement;
- using sound as a creative medium for different purposes;
- notation and other symbolic notation systems.

## **Outreach**

### **BELLAVISTA COMMUNITY AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

Bellavista School continues to be involved in Community Projects of a diverse nature. These encompass serving the educational needs of both adults and children within the Gauteng region, and at times beyond these perimeters in other provinces of South Africa, on an invitational and voluntary basis.

South Africa's education system is an ongoing state of crisis. There is a gross under provision of specialised teacher training, especially in the area of special needs education. In keeping with the practices and philosophy of Inclusive Education, outlined in the White Paper 6 of 2001, and The DoE Guidelines for Full Service/ Inclusive Schools 2009, special needs schools will need to become vital resource centres if we are to offer equal access to all learners to all schools in the next decade. Around the country, teachers are crying out for quality in-service training that equips them with practical skills, academic understanding and professional accreditation. Bellavista School, with its well qualified and professional team, is well positioned to answer this need and we do this through Bellavista SHARE (described earlier).

The Bellavista Children bring vegetables on a weekly basis, to form the basis of a healthy lunch for the 120 children in the Nursery School. This is usually their main meal of the day.

The Bellavista Children also donate toys, books and useful equipment to ensure that the children of Ukukhanya Kwe Zwe School, have ongoing learning opportunities.

Bellavista School Staff organize an exciting Christmas Party each year, for the children and teachers of the nursery school. The funds are derived from ongoing fund raising initiatives, supported by the children and parents of Bellavista. The intention is to culminate the year with an enriching and enjoyable day for the Kwe Zwe children. The Bellavista Children have opportunity to appreciate the part that they have played, in contributing to the well being of these children, and develop a sense of social responsibility and altruism.

## **Grade 7 Community Project**

During the past 7 years, our Grade 7's have been involved, and continue to engage in a Service Programme within the Community. This has covered a myriad of activities which include visiting the elderly, CHOC patients, adoption homes and the SPCA. Recently, the Grade Sevens has supported Hotel Hope by enhancing their environment (e.g. painting, mowing, repairing) and supporting their charity shops with collections.

## **SAALD – South African Association of Learning and Educational Difficulties**

As a member school of SAALD, some of the Bellavista Staff, play an active role within this organization, on a voluntary basis. They are involved in the initiation, planning and organization of workshops, as well as give of their time generously to share their knowledge of education, and their experience of working with children within the inclusive environment, as well as in situations where higher support needs are required.

## **Bellavista Staff**

Since 2000, Bellavista School, in keeping with the Skills Development Initiative has ensured the development of their own, previously disadvantaged staff. This has been established on a needs basis, identified by the employee in consultation with the Skills Development Facilitator, in an attempt to up skill the person in his/her specific line of work, or alternatively assist in developing each individual in area in which, he/she has not had opportunity, but is motivated to learn and grow. Opportunity has been provided within the Bellavista School infrastructure, as well as the extended environment for the implementation of their newly acquired skills.

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## **THERAPY DEPARTMENTS**

Bellavista has a multi-disciplinary team of therapists which consists of Speech-Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Remedial Therapists and Psychologists. All these teams focus on helping the learners reach their potential through therapy programmes implemented individually, in small groups, as well as in classroom situations, on a regular basis.

### **Remedial Therapy:**

The Remedial Department consists of six full time therapists. The aim of this department is to reinforce and consolidate the work done by the learners in the Grades 1 – 7 classrooms in the areas of Literacy and Mathematics. This will enable the learners to perform better in the classroom and prepare them for their successful integration into the mainstream. In addition to specific remedial therapy programmes, the therapists are involved in facilitating small Mathematics and literacy groups which have been differentiated according to the children's abilities and present performance. The therapists, prior to the commencement of therapy, by means of selected standardised tests, identify the learners' areas of specific difficulties and devise and implement directed and focussed programmes to address these weaknesses.

The department is also responsible for the reassessment of those learners who, despite intervention, continue to experience difficulties and who are making limited progress in addition to

those learners who may be ready for mainstreaming. In November, a battery of group standardised tests are administered to the whole school to measure the learners' progress and to identify those learners who will require further therapy in the following year. We can also use this data for systemic evaluation purposes. Grade Seven Leavers are assessed annually and all other leavers are assessed in between July and October.

### **Speech- Language Therapy:**

Speech - Language Therapy is a broad term used to incorporate speech, language and hearing difficulties. This includes the remediation of weak receptive and expressive language and auditory processing skills. Such skills may include one or more of the following: sound errors, listening skills, disrupted fluency, vocabulary, oral and written expression and auditory memory. Seven therapists and two audiologists are on site to facilitate therapy and consultation.

In the Bellavista environment, therapy is conducted in individual or small group sessions. In order to achieve the best possible results, therapy sessions are supplemented by homework activities once per week.

Assessments occur annually and an allotted time is scheduled for each child to be fully assessed. Parents have the opportunity to meet with their child's therapist to discuss the results of the assessment. Other opportunities include the open afternoons once per term and the parents are also invited to observe therapy during the first term of the year. Further meetings can be scheduled as deemed necessary by either parent(s) / therapist.

### **Occupational Therapy**

The Occupational Therapy Department consists of five full time therapists, with a variety of expertise including Sensory Integration and Neuro Developmental Therapy. Difficulties addressed in Occupational Therapy include: Sensory Integration, Postural Control, Gross and Fine Motor Co-ordination, Visual Perception and Task Application.

The team work with children of all ages, but concentrate on the younger child. With the younger children (Grade R – Grade 3) there is a focus on individual therapy as well as sensory-motor groups in our well equipped 'ball' room. With older children, Occupational Therapy assists with the refinement of school related tasks through a medium such as handwriting or iPad proficiency groups. We also use the expertise available to assist with vocational skills like using a laptop in the context of the classroom.

Occupational Therapy uses purposeful activities, specialised equipment and techniques and a therapeutic relationship to treat the child with learning difficulties. Assessments are done annually and are based on standardised tests, but also on clinical observations of neurological functions and behaviour. We work closely in a team with teachers and other therapists and close parent contact is important to us, as difficulties can impact on activities of every day life.

### **Psychological Intervention:**

Bellavista School has three part time psychologists whose main areas of focus are therapy and assessment. They further assist us by running parent support groups. Children with emotional difficulties such as poor self esteem, anxiety, aggression, depression, dealing with divorce, trauma, relationship problems etc., receive therapy. Therapy is usually conducted in a one to one setting and can take the form of a structured programme or be more non-directive. However, issues such

as bullying or social skill problems are sometimes addressed in a group situation using the principles of Restorative Practice. Children who are due to leave the school, those requiring an updated assessment and children experiencing emotional problems or limited progress are assessed by a psychologist or psychometrist on an IQ an emotional assessment battery.

## **PLAY THERAPY: WHAT IS IT AND HOW IT WORKS?**

### **What is Play Therapy?**

Play Therapy is a specific counselling approach in which games, toys and mediums such as clay, drawings and paint are used to help a child to express their emotions, thoughts, wishes and needs. It helps them to understand muddled feelings and upsetting events that they have not had the chance or the skills to sort out properly. Rather than having to explain what is troubling them, as adult therapy usually expects; children use play to communicate at their own level and at their own pace, without feeling interrogated or threatened.

Play Therapy helps children in a variety of ways. Children receive emotional support and can learn to understand more about their own feelings and thoughts. Sometimes they may re-enact or play out traumatic or difficult life experiences in order to make sense of their past and cope better with their future. Children may also learn to manage relationships and conflicts in more appropriate ways. Play allows children to practice new behaviours in a safe environment -- skills and roles needed for survival.

### **What happens during play therapy sessions?**

**The initial focus of the therapy is on building a relationship between a child and the therapist. This relationship is a very important tool in the therapeutic process because a child will more readily talk about their intimate feelings when they feel respected and accepted.**

In the sessions the therapist uses specific techniques to assess how a child experiences their world and how they communicate and react to the events and people in their world. Children are lead to become aware of what they are feeling and opportunities are given to express these feelings. Awareness is a very important process in play therapy, because without awareness change is not possible.

Throughout the therapy the child is empowered and supported to learn more about who they are, to talk about things that are frightening or painful, to be self supportive and to experiment with new behaviour.

Play Therapy can help children to become aware of what they are feeling and how these feelings manifest in behaviour or one's body. They can learn how to become better at regulating emotions and expressing them in constructive ways. They can discover who they are and what their strong and weak points, needs, wishes, thoughts and dreams are.

### **When should I bring my child for play therapy?**

It is very important that emotional and behavioural problems are dealt with at an early stage. If left untreated these problems may cause a child and his family a great deal of distress. If a child does not understand his behaviour or have control over it, it can cause fear and break down confidence.

This can impact on other areas of life, such as the ability to complete tasks and schoolwork, to make friends and to deal with stress.

If you find that your child displays strange, uncharacteristic behaviour (like being aggressive, destructive, withdrawn) after a specific stressful event (like divorce, new school, birth of a sibling, death) and this behaviour lasts for at least two weeks, it probably is time to seek professional help. This behaviour may be an indication that your child is not able to deal with and express what he is experiencing or feeling. Ask your child's teacher, caregiver or a significant adult in his life if they have noticed this behaviour.

Sometimes your child's behaviour may be inappropriate even if there is no specific stressor that you are aware of. Or the cause of the behaviour may be something totally different from that which you have imagined. Or your child may have had problems with regulating emotions from an early age and does not seem to be getting any better. In such cases it is recommended that you speak to a professional who will advise you if it is necessary for you to take your child for therapy.

Research has shown that play therapy can successfully address issues related to:

- Self-concept & self-esteem
- Making friends
- Adapting to new situations (such as a new school or family set-up).
- Symptomatic behavior (such as stomach ache, headaches, anxiousness, depression, bed-wetting)
- Trauma (such as divorce, sexual molestation, the death of a parent, hijacking)
- Fear and anxiety
- Nightmares
- Aggressive behavior or rage
- Shyness
- Grief

### **How Long Does Play Therapy Take?**

*This depends on the child's personality, the nature of the bond between the child and the therapist and the nature of the problem. Some children are very shy and need a lot of encouragement to express their feelings and thoughts, while others are quick to talk. Some children have developed clever ways to avoid thinking about their feelings because this is too painful for them and they need time to feel safe to break down their barriers and build courage to deal with their emotions and the painful events in their lives. Accordingly therapy duration is very child and therapist dependent.*

### **What is the role of the therapist?**

The therapist participates in activities and play. She creates a safe environment in which the child can get in touch with who he/she is, what he/she is feeling, thinking, wishing and dreaming. She does not judge or interpret, but rather reflects on what she sees and experiences with the child. She believes in the child's own ability to find a balance in his/her life, therefore, she helps him/her to become aware of what he/she is doing and feeling to enable him/her to make changes if he/she wishes to do so. Sometimes she makes suggestions, but the responsibility for accepting and applying these suggestions rests on the child. She always gives the child choices, because children cannot accept responsibility for something they did not choose themselves.

## **How can parents participate in play therapy?**

Interaction with the parents forms a crucial part of therapy. Families play an important role in children's healing processes. The interaction between children's problems and their families is always complex. Sometimes children develop problems as a way of signaling that there is something wrong in the family. Other times the entire family becomes distressed because the child's problems are so disruptive. In all cases, children and families heal faster when they work together.

The therapist usually talks to the parents prior to the first session with the child, because it is important to understand the context in which the behaviour of the child has developed. It is also necessary to know what the parent's communication and discipline patterns with the child and the nature of boundaries are. The therapist then works with the child alone, but she will contact the parents should important issues arise. Regular feedback sessions are scheduled. The therapist and parents will work together to understand the child and to develop constructive, respectful and supportive ways of communication with the child.

## **Why Can't I Have More Than One Therapist?**

Generally speaking, having more than one therapist for individual therapy is not a good idea and can actually do more harm than good. It is a good idea, for anyone questioning the therapist's current treatment, to talk to the existing therapist about treatment concerns. When you see more than one therapist, it can feel as if they are supplying conflicting information (even when they are not). The client may feel as if he is in the middle and being pulled in different directions by the therapists, and/or it can set up a dynamic where the client may play the therapists against each other. Therapy is about a depth of relationship.

There are treatment programs, such as social skills training, where more than one therapist works with each client. These programs successfully use a treatment team approach, where the clinicians' roles are clearly defined and the program is structured in such a way that the use of additional support clinicians provides maximum benefit to the client. However, these are structured programs where the therapists are specifically trained to work in a treatment team; these programs cannot be created simply by adding more therapists to an existing course of therapy. In this case, it is important for ongoing open communication between therapists to prevent treatment splits that can tend to occur.

## **References**

[http://www.playtherapy.co.za/what\\_is\\_play\\_therapy.html](http://www.playtherapy.co.za/what_is_play_therapy.html)

<http://www.fairviewcounseling.org/playtherapy.htm>

<http://www.bapt.info/whatispt.htm>

<http://www.a4pt.org/ps.index.cfm?ID=1653>

The School policy on the provision of Play Therapy is that it is offered on a short term basis on recommendation of the Staff if the child is affected in class by matters that can be addressed in internal therapy. Systemic matters, for example, dealing with a divorce in the home, are not taken into therapy at School but a Psychologist will be happy to recommend external therapists to you



and your child.

### **SCHOOL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES:**

- In all grades **continuous assessment** occurs throughout the school year and records are kept by the class teacher.
- **Cycle tests** for all subject areas are regular procedures for Grade 4 - 7 learners.
- **Formal examinations** for Grade Five, Six and Seven take place over several days during the November of each academic year. Grade Sevens also write mid year exams.
- A **formal educational assessment** is conducted on all school leavers by the remedial therapists, psychologists or psychometrists.
- **Formal testing** by the relevant therapists occur yearly for children receiving Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy.
- **Formal Educational testing** takes place for all school learners in the areas of:
  - Reading
  - Spelling
  - Mathematics

These tests are administered and scored by the school remedial therapists from the first week in November each year.

- **Psychological Intellectual Assessments** are conducted as necessary but not more frequently than every two years. Costs of these assessments is to the parents' account. **Emotional Assessments** are completed as and when indicated.

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### **SPORTING ACTIVITIES, COCURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND INTEGRATED DAY**

The objective of the co-curricular programme is to provide pupils with the opportunity of participating in activities that enhance their school experience and develop each child's physical potential, character and discipline. The co-curricular programme should encourage pupils to express themselves outside the classroom in the pursuit of one or more activities.

The focus at Bellavista School is to promote an active lifestyle with the ultimate goal being that this becomes a life long commitment. Sport should bring the child pleasure and entertainment through organized activity. As a school we hope to achieve maximum participation and maximum enjoyment as well as facilitating the realisation of each child's potential within his or her chosen field.

Physical Education is part of the formal school timetable and the children are scheduled for a minimum of two sessions a week.

The co-curricular programme is fundamentally made up of three main components namely:

- The Main Sporting Code
- Cultural activities
- Alternative Sports

The annual Interhouse Athletics is a special event always enjoyed by our Bellavista Community.

### **The Main Sporting Codes**

This category of co-curricular activity is open to all pupils at no additional cost. Therapists and teachers may input and direct the children to specific activities.

Here the focus will be on exposing pupils to the skills, rules and application required in the major sporting codes. Attention will be given to the major sporting codes at school level. Sports selected will be limited so as to ensure the efficient management of each code.

Sports offered at present are limited to:

Cricket	Netball	Softball	Soccer	Athletics
Cross Country	Tennis	Archery	Volleyball	

Should additional sporting codes be proposed for inclusion in this category this must be approved by the Principal after consultation with the School Management Team.

Specialists may be contracted in to offer activities at any level. The person in charge of sport will manage this involvement.

### **Cultural Activities**

This category of co-curricular activity is open to all pupils at no additional cost. The cultural programme offers pupils exposure to other disciplines outside of sport. The cultural activities will focus on completing the holistic development of the individual through the pursuit of a cultural activity. These offerings vary based on interest expressed.

Cultural activities envisaged are:

Music and Choir	Crafts	Chess	Drama	Art	Needlework
Coding	Robotics (by invitation only)				

### **Expanded Opportunities**

*These activities may require additional fees to be levied to participants.*

This category of sport will cater for the many varieties of alternative outdoor sports found at present. These activities should promote a healthy lifestyle, genuine physical activity and an appreciation for the environment. These activities must instil in the child an appreciation of the etiquette, traditions, skills and laws through a disciplined and structured approach. It is possible that some alternative activities may be run by outside individuals in conjunction with Bellavista School and the person in charge of sport. These service providers will levy additional fees for such activities in order to cover their costs. Persons running such programmes will need to agree terms with Bellavista School and may need to sign a contract once finalised. As far as possible, staff will be associated and involved in these activities.

Alternative / Adventure sports proposed for consideration thus far are:

Boxing	Playball
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## **Management and Staffing of Co-Curricular Programme**

As far as possible, all co-curricular activities will be managed and supervised by Bellavista staff. Where specialist skills are required or where a member of staff is not completely familiar with all aspects of an activity, coaches will be employed. These coaches should be equipped to manage the age group involved and have the skills and knowledge required for that activity. Professional coaches will be used as much as possible so that they can empower staff and provide the pupils with the appropriate skills they require at that level. All coaching staff will report to the sport co-ordinator and ultimately the Principal.

### **Participation**

Teachers in charge of an activity are to encourage and motivate learners to participate. Co-curricular activities are compulsory to all pupils at Bellavista School on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The sport session forms part of the school day that closes at 15h00. Once a commitment to an activity is made, it is expected that the pupil will see the full programme through.

Each child is given the opportunity to learn skills and develop talent, to exercise and to enhance physical well-being. Valuable life skills are learned through sport and Bellavista School recognises the activity as a valuable and imperative part of a child's development. As such, sport and physical education lessons are compulsory.

Grade 1 and 2 learners participate in co-curricular activities as part of their integrated day, which runs twice a week. Grade Ones begin this programme in the second part of the first term, following the midterm break. A range of sporting and cultural activities will occur.

### **Age Groups**

All participants must compete in the correct age group for individual sports in accordance with rules governing school sport. In other team sport codes, the learners can play in their grade group below theirs. The age group of the child is based on the age of the child in that calendar year. If he/she is turning 10 during the year in question then he/she is Under 10.

### **Team Selection**

Teams will be selected by the coach/s responsible for that event. Selection for all teams must follow trials to be run at the beginning of each new season. Every child must be given equal opportunity during trials. It is considered an honour to be selected. Bellavista is a small school with a limited depth in numbers to support highly competitive sides. Whilst we acknowledge this reality, we would like the children with a sporting aptitude to enjoy matches with a measure of competitive edge. Festivals will be an opportunity for wider participation from the group.

Teams will be chosen on merit and should represent the strongest possible team in the relevant age group. It is important that the child knows that teams may change following outstanding individual performances. The decision of the coach is final. No parental interference will be tolerated. Disputes and queries should be referred to the person in charge of that sport and age group.

In case of illness, a call should be made to the reception/ school office or to the teacher in charge as soon as possible. Failure to arrive at a sports fixture is considered a serious break of our

expected code of conduct. The announcement of team selections should be done in a sensitive manner.

### **Code of Conduct**

All participants in the co-curricular programme will be expected to behave in a manner befitting the activity. Coaches and staff should be respected at all times. Learners who misbehave or disrupt the activity will be disciplined and may face suspension from that activity if the offence is serious. Discipline issues of a serious nature must be reported to the Principal. The Principal must approve suspension of a child from an activity.

### **Dress Code**

All pupils participating in co-curricular should be dressed appropriately. Pupils who are not dressed appropriately will be excluded from matches and fixtures. Sports kit must be worn for practice and matches and should be in keeping with the standards set by national and regional associations. As far as possible, kit should be functional and versatile so that the expense to parents is limited.

Please check the website for updates in respect of the sports uniform:  
[www.bellavista.org.za/uniforms](http://www.bellavista.org.za/uniforms)

### **Facilities and Equipment**

Pupils will be expected to provide their own equipment in disciplines or codes that require specific individual equipment (cricket pads, guards, helmets etc). General equipment is shared (bats, balls etc.). Equipment is controlled and cared for by the staff member in charge of the sport. All equipment must be locked away at the end of each match or practice.

### **Awards and Colours**

Refer to separate awards policy.

### **Appointment of Captains**

Each coach is to put forward his or her selection of captain. The input of the pupils involved in that particular activity should be considered.

### **Notification and Confirmation of Matches**

Learners are to be given written notice of upcoming matches at the start of the season. All relevant match details should be included – where possible a map of the venue should be included for fixtures played away. The bus provides compulsory transport to the away venue, and an optional return if parents cannot fetch from there. A coach or teacher attends the bus.

### **Cancellation of Matches and Practices**

No activity is to be cancelled unless the Principal has been consulted. In the event of inclement weather the teacher, or coach responsible, must supervise pupils until the end of the school day. This will usually take place in the teacher's classroom or another suitable venue. Once a match has been cancelled the receptionist must be informed of the decision and of the whereabouts of the children during their scheduled practice or match time.

Generally, the decision to cancel fixtures will be taken at 12h00 and not before. In extreme cases it may be possible to notify pupils and parents earlier than this. Every effort must be made to honour all fixtures and to go ahead with a fixture if at all possible. In the event of lightning in close proximity to the school matches and practices should be halted and suitable shelter found for the pupils until

the threat has passed. Pridwin have right of decision over the usability of the fields in wet weather.

### **Co-Curricular Timetable**

This is to be issued by the person in charge of sport following consultation with the staff and approval of the Principal.

### **Transport**

Teams might require some assistance from parents in transporting pupils to sporting venues. This needs to be managed by the teacher in charge. Pupils who are not collected at an away venue on completion of the match must return to Bellavista unless the teacher in charge has been informed of alternative arrangements. Pupils travelling in school transport and with parents will be expected to behave correctly and be correctly dressed for the fixture.

### **Catering and Refreshments**

Coaches or teachers involved are to ensure that the refreshments have been arranged for the players. The captain of the team should invite visiting parents and pupils for refreshments at the appropriate time.

### **Results**

Results of all fixtures are to be handed to the Principal's PA for inclusion in the school newsletter. The captain or vice captain will be expected to announce the result at the weekly assembly.

### **PLEASE NOTE**

Term 1 & 2 : No co-curricular activities in the first and last week of term i.e. school closes at 14h00 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Term 3 : No co-curricular activities in the first week of term. All co-curricular activities stop mid November. Please watch the calendar and newsletter for the specific date.

Parents are to be encouraged to engender a feeling of honour and good spirit in a child who is selected for any team/sporting event, and to encourage that child to be totally committed to that team by attending the event. This is especially important in fixtures against other schools.

We would also encourage parents to support their child at fixtures and matches and to help with transporting the teams to away matches/fixtures if possible. We would also like to encourage parents who would like to further develop their child's sporting potential to make use of outside coaching and assistance.

Parents and learners will be asked to sign acknowledgement of this sporting code and commit thereto annually.

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### **SCHOOL INFORMATION AND REGULATIONS**

The school information regulations serve as a general guide for the standards of dress and behaviour expected of each Bellavistonian. Each learner, parent and staff member is expected to conform to these standards and assist each other in maintaining these standards.

## DRESS CODE

Bellavista School has adopted a basic and affordable uniform. Please ensure your child is correctly dressed. If, for any reason, a learner cannot observe the dress code he/she must report to her class teacher with a note from his/her parent to obtain sanction for an irregularity of dress.

### Grade R Dress Code

- Bellavista Long Sleeved Turtle Neck Shirt
- Bellavista Green T-shirt
- Green Bellavista Shorts
- Bellavista Tracksuit
- White or black takkies/black or brown sandals (no superhero)
- Bellavista Ankle Socks
- Bellavista Green Jersey (for cool days)
- Dark Green Dri-Mac (for cold days)
- Bellavista Fleece – optional for wearing under the tracksuit
- Please note tha Bellavista School have a yarmulkah available for those who observe this code of dress.

### Grade 1 - 6

Summer: Monday, Wednesday, Friday	Summer: Tuesday, Thursday	Winter: Monday, Wednesday, Friday	Winter: Tuesdays, Thursdays
Short Grey Trousers	Bellavista Short Sleeved Golf Shirt or Bellavista Issue	Long Grey Trousers	Bellavista Short Sleeved Golf Shirt or Bellavista Issue
Bellavista Short Sleeved White Cotton Shirt	House Shirt	Bellavista Long Sleeved White Cotton Shirt	House Shirt or Long Sleeved turtle neck shirt
Black School Shoes	Green Bellavista Shorts	Green School Jersey	Green Bellavista Shorts
Grey Socks	Mostly White/Black Sports Shoe	Fleece	Mostly White/Black Sports Shoe
Yellow Cap	Bellavista Sports/ Tennis Socks	Grey Socks	Bellavista Sports Socks
Dark Green Dri Mac (for wet days)	BellavistaTracksuit (if chilly)	Black School Shoes	Bellavista Sports Socks
	Yellow Cap	Dark Green Dri Mac	Green School Jersey
		Bellavista scarf/ Beanie/ Bellavista Green gloves (optional)	Fleece
		A <b>full</b> Tracksuit extremely cold days	Full Bellavista Track Suit
		Yellow Cap	Dark Green Dri-mac (for wet days)
			Bellavista Scarf/ Beanie/ Gloves(optional)
			Yellow Cap

## Grade 7 Dress Code

<b>Summer: Monday, Wednesday, Friday</b>	<b>Summer: Tuesday, Thursday</b>	<b>Winter: Monday, Wednesday, Friday</b>	<b>Winter: Tuesdays, Thursdays</b>
Short/ Long Grey Trousers Short Sleeved White Cotton Shirt Black School Shoes Grey Socks Red Cap Red Blazer Dark Green Dri Mac (for wet days)	Bellavista Short Sleeved Golf Shirt or Bellavista Issue House Shirt Green Bellavista Shorts White/Black Sports Shoe Bellavista Sports/ Tennis Socks Bellavista Tracksuit (if chilly) Red Cap	Long Grey Trousers Bellavista Long Sleeved White Cotton Shirt Green School Jersey Red Fleece Grey Socks Black School Shoes Dark Green Dri Mac Bellavista scarf/ Beanie/ Gloves (optional) A <b>full</b> Tracksuit extremely cold days Red Cap Red Blazer	Bellavista Short Sleeved Golf Shirt or Bellavista Issue House Shirt Green Bellavista Shorts White/Black Sports Shoe Bellavista Sports Socks Green School Jersey Fleece Full Bellavista Track Suit Dark Green Dri-mac (for wet days) Bellavista scarf/ Beanie (optional) Red Cap

Please note that Bellavista School have a yarmulka available for those who observe this code of dress.

## Boys and Girls Sport Dress Code

The dress code of the morning on Tuesdays and Thursdays are carried over into the afternoon sports practices. Caps are compulsory. However, please note match dress codes:

<b>Cricket</b>	<b>Soccer</b>	<b>Netball</b>
White sports shorts Bellavista Short Sleeved Golf Shirt Long White Socks White Sports Shoe Yellow Cap (Gr 7: Red Cap)  <i>Personal kit is optional.</i>	Green Bellavista Shorts Bellavista Short Sleeved Golf Shirt Mostly White/Black Soccer Boots Bellavista Soccer Socks Shinpads Full Bellavista Tracksuit Yellow Cap (Gr 7: Red Cap)	Green netball skorts Green netball top Short White Socks White Sports Shoe Full Bellavista Tracksuit Yellow Cap (Gr 7: Red Cap)

## Grade 1 – 6 Girls Dress Code

Summer: Monday, Wednesday, Friday	Summer: Tuesday, Thursday	Winter: Monday, Wednesday, Friday	Winter: Tuesdays, Thursdays
Tartan Bellavista Skirt  Bellavista Short Sleeved Golf Shirt or White Cotton Bellavista Blouse  Black School Shoes  White Anklet Socks  Yellow Cap  Dark Green Dri Mac (for wet days)	Bellavista Short Sleeved Golf Shirt or Bellavista Issue House Shirt  Green Bellavista Shorts  White/Black Sports Shoe  White Anklet Socks  Bellavista Tracksuit (if chilly)  Yellow Cap	Tartan Bellavista Skirt  Bellavista Long Sleeved White Cotton Shirt  Green School Jersey  Fleece  Long Green Socks or Green Tights  Black School Shoes  Dark Green Dri Mac (for wet days)  Bellavista scarf/ Beanie (optional)  A <b>full</b> Tracksuit extremely cold days  Yellow Cap	Bellavista Short Sleeved Golf Shirt or Bellavista Issue House Shirt or Long Sleeved Turtle Neck Shirt  Green Bellavista Shorts  White/Black Sports Shoe  White Anklet Socks  Green School Jersey  Fleece  Full Bellavista Track Suit  Dark Green Dri-mac (for wet days)  Bellavista scarf/ Beanie (optional)  Yellow Cap

## Grade 7 Girls Dress Code

Summer: Monday, Wednesday, Friday	Summer: Tuesday, Thursday	Winter: Monday, Wednesday, Friday	Winter: Tuesdays, Thursdays
Tartan Bellavista Skirt  Bellavista Short Sleeved Golf Shirt or White Cotton Bellavista Blouse  Black School Shoes  White Anklet Socks  Red Cap  Dark Green Dri Mac (for wet days)  Red Blazer	Bellavista Short Sleeved Golf Shirt or Bellavista Issue House Shirt  Green Bellavista Shorts  White/Black Sports Shoe  White Anklet Socks  Bellavista Tracksuit (if chilly)  Red Cap	Tartan Bellavista Skirt  Bellavista Long Sleeved White Cotton Shirt  Green School Jersey  Fleece  Long Green Socks or Green Tights  Black School Shoes  Dark Green Dri Mac (for wet days)  Bellavista scarf/ Beanie (optional)  A <b>full</b> Tracksuit extremely cold days  Red Cap  Red Blazer	Bellavista Short Sleeved Golf Shirt or Bellavista Issue House Shirt or Long Sleeved Turtle Neck Shirt  Green Bellavista Shorts  White/Black Sports Shoe  White Anklet Socks  Green School Jersey  Fleece  Full Bellavista Track Suit  Dark Green Dri-mac (for wet days)  Bellavista scarf/ Beanie (optional)  Red Cap



## Grade 7 Girls Dress Code

Summer: Monday, Wednesday, Friday	Summer: Tuesday, Thursday	Winter: Monday, Wednesday, Friday	Winter: Tuesdays, Thursdays
Tartan Bellavista Skirt	Bellavista Short Sleeved Golf Shirt or Bellavista Issue House Shirt	Tartan Bellavista Skirt	Bellavista Short Sleeved Golf Shirt or Bellavista Issue House Shirt
White Cotton Bellavista Blouse	Green Bellavista Shorts	Bellavista Long Sleeved White Cotton Shirt	Green Bellavista Shorts
Black School Shoes	White/Black Sports Shoe	Green School Jersey	White/Black Sports Shoe
White Ankle Socks	White Ankle Socks	Red Fleece	White Ankle Socks
Dark Green Dri Mac (for wet days)	Bellavista Tracksuit (if chilly)	Long Green Socks or Green Tights	Green School Jersey
Red Cap	Red Cap	Black School Shoes	Red Fleece
		Dark Green Dri-mac	<b>Full</b> Bellavista Track Suit
		Bellavista scarf/ Beanie/ Gloves (optional)	Dark Green Dri-mac (for wet days)
		A <b>full</b> Tracksuit on extremely cold days	Bellavista scarf/ Beanie/ Gloves (optional)
		Red Cap	Red Cap

### Snapscan for Uniform Shop purchases:

For your convenience, uniforms can be purchased from your mobile device! Ask the shop for details.



Snap here to pay



[getsnapscan.com](https://getsnapscan.com)



## SCHOOL TERMS AND HOURS OF ATTENDANCE

### School Terms :

The school terms follow the ISASA schools' Gauteng calendar which is collaboratively decided on a yearly basis. The calendar for the current and upcoming year can be found on our website [www.bellavista.org](http://www.bellavista.org)

### School Times:

All children to be dropped by 7.45 am at the Wingfield Avenue entrance only. Each day, all are to be collected from Wingfield Avenue gate. 15 minutes after the official close of day, the staff manning the duty will bring any children still waiting to the front office where they can be supervised. Please be prompt!

### Grade R

Mondays: 07h45 – 12h45  
Tuesdays: 07h45 – 12h45  
Wednesdays: 07h45 – 12h45  
Thursdays: 07h45 – 12h45  
Fridays: 07h45 – 13h15

### Grades 1-2

Mondays: 07h45 – 14h00  
Tuesdays: 07h45 – 14h00  
Wednesdays: 07h45 – 13h30  
Thursdays: 07h45 – 14h00  
Fridays: 07h45 – 13h15

### Grades 3-7

Mondays: 07h45 – 14h00  
Tuesdays: 07h45 – 15h00 with sport session  
Wednesdays: 07h45 – 13h30  
Thursdays: 07h45 – 15h00 with sport session  
Fridays: 07h45 – 13h15

### PLEASE NOTE:

Term 1 No extra murals in the first and last week of the term  
Term 2 No extra murals in the first and last week of the term  
Term 3 No extra murals in the first week of term. Extramurals stop in November. Watch the calendar and newsletter for the date.

### Late Arrival and Early Departures

Any child arriving late must report to the school receptionist before proceeding to class. This request is in place to monitor late arrivals. Late arrival is recorded on Pencilbox. Should a child need to depart from school before the official close of school hours, the parent or designated

person must sign the child out from the Reception. The early departure will be recorded on Pencilbox.

## **School Attendance**

Attendance during term time is vitally important for each child at Bellavista School, in order for each one to gain maximum benefit from the remedial help being provided. Removing a child during term time is **not** recommended. If you wish to take your child out of school during term time, for exceptional reasons only, this **must** be discussed personally with the school Principal and permission must be requested in writing. It is in **your child's best interest** to attend school.

Illness: If your child is absent due to sickness, please have the courtesy to phone the school and/or to send a text message/ email/ note of explanation when your child returns.

Appointments: Please make every effort to book medical appointments in the afternoons in order not to disrupt your child's school routine.

Weekend Attendance: During the school year a number of Saturday functions are compulsory in order to meet the government requirements re number of school days. These functions may include the school's Sports Day/ Bellavista Bash and the school's Final Assembly etc.

## **COMMUNICATION**

This is a vitally important component of a successful education. Do not let any concern grow - address it as soon as possible.

- A **Newsletter** will be emailed to your provided email address every last Wednesday of the month. It will also be posted onto the website at the same time. This letter is an important one in the communication network.
- A "**Heads Up**" is distributed each Monday alerting you to information you may need that week.
- The **Deputy Principals** and **Heads of Department** are available to meet you at a convenient time if the matter cannot be resolved or addressed with the class teacher. If you feel you need lengthy appointment, please phone the school secretary and book a mutually convenient time. Should the matter not be resolved by the approach to a manager, then an appointment can be made with the staff members involved and the **School Principal**.
- The **Class Teacher** is available to discuss any matters with you prior to the start of school or at collection time. Book a time with him/her.
- The **Agenda Book or Communication Book** is an ideal medium for communication between the teacher, therapist, learner and parent. Insist that you see the diary daily - read, check and sign before the diary is returned to the school bag.
- **Parents' Open Afternoon** - One Monday afternoon per term is scheduled as an 'open

afternoon'. Parents are encouraged to attend to view their children's books and speak to the teachers and therapists. This afternoon is marked on the termly school calendar and is confirmed in the newsletter, prior to the actual date. It commences at approximately 13h45 and runs for an hour.

- **Parents' Evenings** usually take place during the final week of term. The dates are shown in the school calendar. Please diarise the evening applicable to your child.
- **Email addresses** are available for your convenience – a list is updated on the website.
- **SMS notifications** are sent out via the school office from time to time.
- **Class blogs** might be deployed by teachers to assist you.
- The school is active on **Facebook**.

As every attempt is made for a team feedback with parents, therapists and teachers, appointment times are allotted to families and need to be strictly adhered to.

First Term	- Written class reports (Gr1 verbal)
Second Term	- Written class reports
Third Term	- Written class and therapy reports

All reports must be collected from the foyer of the administration block prior to your appointment. All interviews take place in the therapy rooms on the upper floor. The Principal is available during each Parents' Evening if any parent wishes to speak to her.

- **Medication:** If your child is allergic or is on any form of medication or starts any treatment, the school must be informed immediately IN WRITING with all the necessary particulars. If there is any change of medication or dosage, please notify the school. If your child has to take medication during the school day, this must be administered from the school administration office by the secretary/receptionist. You are issued with forms to complete regarding the administration of medicines on enrolment and then annually.
- **Addresses and Telephone Numbers:** It is imperative that any change of address or telephone number is given to the office so that our records can be kept up to date.
- **Money matters:** Please ensure that any money sent to school with your child is in a sealed envelope. Please mark the envelope with your child's name, class, amount and purpose of the money enclosed. EFT payments must have a clear reference note. All cheque payments must be made to 'Bellavista School'.

## FOOD

**Lunch Boxes:** Please pack a sensible, healthy lunch for your child to eat during break. A sandwich, a piece of fruit and juice/water are preferable to chips and sweets and coke. No eating is allowed during lessons. Fizzy drinks (i.e. Coke, Sprite, Fanta) are not considered suitable drinks for school and are not allowed. Please do not send sweets and other foods

high in sugar and colourants. Biltong, cheese, fruit etc are preferred healthy choices. Please do not send for class tucks or on class outings. In the case of extreme nut allergies, a class may be asked to observe a 'nut free zone' protocol.

**Friday Tuck:** A class tuck is held every Friday and this is purchased by the rest of the school. Eats are supplied by learners in each class on a rotation basis. Mums are informed of their turn to supply tuck in advance. The proceeds of the tuck sale are used for the benefit of the class concerned. Please try to provide wholesome items for tuck day. Please remember to consider the supply of Kosher items. Please do not include chewing gum or jelly sachets in class tuck. The event is LOW KEY and CHILD FOCUSED.

**Tuck Shop** is open Tuesday and Thursday at second break. Children order according to the options available at the time.

The Tuck Shop is not open the first and the last week of each term.

**Chewing Gum** is forbidden unless prescribed by an OT as part of the sensory diet of your child.

## **HOMEWORK GUIDELINES**

Please refer to the extended Guidelines for homework printed in the school issue Agenda and Communication books.

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## **THE CREDIT SYSTEM**

Credits were introduced at Bellavista as a form of motivation to recognise achievement in academics, behaviour, helpfulness, caring for others, effort, "Grade Assemblies" and for going the extra mile as an individual.

These credits count for house points and the house earning the most credits is awarded an interhouse trophy at the end of the year, at final assembly.

There is also a class competition where the children earning the most credits in that particular class are awarded either a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> place credit certificate at the end of the year at final assembly. It is important to remember the reasons for which credits are awarded, as it is not an academic award.

In the Foundation Phase, the learners record their credits on individual charts in the classroom, whilst in the intermediate/senior phase these are recorded in their homework diaries. (It is to be kept in mind that learners in the lower end of the school collect credits at a faster rate than at the senior level.) In the Foundation Phase, 5 spaces or stars are equal to 1 credit. In the Intermediate and Senior Phase the teachers work on their own system, awarding their learners credits for individual achievements and effort. There is a chart in the Agenda Book to record achievements.

Credit badges are awarded when they have earned 20, 50, 75, 100, 150, 200 credits respectively.

These credits are presented in their house colours at Friday assembly. Parents are encouraged to attend these assemblies to share the kudos of their child.

This system recognises each learner as an individual and rewards all aspects of their development at Bellavista.

## **SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **A. PRINCIPLES**

1. These Discipline Guidelines are built around the expected behaviours laid out to learners in respect of a Code of Behaviour expected at our school. This document is attached to the guidelines and expect:
  - 1.1. A Love of Learning demonstrated through regular school attendance; participation in the cognitive thinking skills programme; motivation and diligence with class work and homework.
  - 1.2. Respect of school regulation through adherence to the dress code; adherence to schedules.
  - 1.3. Respect for the rights, wellbeing and property of others.
  - 1.4. Developing competence through courtesy, honesty, co-operation, participation and tolerance.
  - 1.5. A sense of social responsibility through participation and support of outreach programmes; taking responsibility to self-regulate their actions; adherence to safety regulations around the school; moving around the school in an orderly manner; playing sensible playground games; no weapons at school; taking care of our environment by recycling goods and placing litter in the bins.
  - 1.6. Developing good sportsmanship through participation in school sports events; representing the school in sports teams proudly when selected as a team member; acknowledging positive contributions made by a team member; learning to win/lose graciously; being responsible for one's thoughts, actions and deeds in any situation.
  - 1.7. Rejection of unacceptable behaviour such as bullying; insolence; dishonesty and deceit; cheating; cruelty and discrimination.
2. Consequences for breaking the Code of Conduct are predetermined and uniform across the school.
3. Final judgment about behaviour rests with the Principal who will consult general and executive staff to reach a fair verdict in situations of serious misdemeanour.
4. The consequences for transgressing the expected conduct are transparent to all and are presented in language that is accessible to every learner, Grade R – 7.
5. While there are consequences for deviant behaviour, the emphasis will always remain on POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT, building up learners and not breaking them down. Equal attention will be placed between commendations and on warnings.
6. There are standard procedures regarding day to day management of the children that we

will communicate and comply with.

## **B. POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT**

### **Credits:**

The emphasis is on Esprit de Corps and the team as well as the individual. Credits can be awarded to the children for:

Right values and good attitudes

Sportsmanship

Recycling efforts and Community Service

Academic performance

Principal's discretion

## **C. CONSEQUENCES OF ACTIONS – building a responsibility for self**

### **Discipline Chart:**

This chart will be transparent to all learners. It will be mounted in each venue, not just homerooms. The chart outlines the reporting line when children contravene the Code of Conduct clearly. It is written in age appropriate language. It places responsibility on the teacher as first line of discipline, but indicates where matters need to be referred to the Deputy and Principal clearly. It is printed in the Agenda and Communication Books and is signed by each pupil annually. The chart outlines the reporting line when children contravene the Code of Conduct clearly. Each class teacher will discuss the chart with the children and refer them back to it as the need arises.

### **Warnings:**

Warnings for behaviour offences and work ethic issues should be kept separate. Teachers are cautious to issue warnings for acts of commission and not omission. Children are to be disciplined for issues of defiance rather than occasional irresponsibility. Staff will consciously guard against punitive and petty policing.

### **Principal and Deputy Based discipline:**

At this level, the discipline will take a formal approach with a disciplinary hearing. The hearing will follow set procedures for suspension and expulsion.

## **D. DISCIPLINARY HEARING:**

The purpose of a disciplinary enquiry shall be:

- i. To hear all relevant evidence concerning the matter;
- ii. To reach a just and balanced verdict;
- iii. Once a verdict has been reached, to:
  - a) Attempt to get the learner to accept responsibility for improving or rectifying his or her behaviour.

- b) Evaluate whether any actions taken by either parties could prevent a recurrence of the incorrect behaviour.

A learner who is accused of misconduct must be given a chance to account for his or her behaviour. The onus on proving the learner's misconduct lies with the school. The learner must be given reasonable notice of the time and venue of the hearing (between five and seven school days). The notice must also set out the essential details of the misconduct of which he or she is charged and inform the learner of his or her rights during the hearing.

These rights are:

- a) to be fully informed of the charges against him/her;
- b) to be represented during the proceedings by a parent, guardian or other;
- c) to call witnesses;
- d) to cross examine any witness;
- e) to present evidence in mitigation;
- f) to appeal to a higher authority;
- g) to be assisted by an interpreter if required;

The Principal or a person designated by the Principal shall preside over the disciplinary enquiry. On reaching a final decision, the Chairperson shall make known to the learner the decision as well as the reasons for having reached such a decision. A written record must be kept of all the proceedings of a disciplinary enquiry. Proceedings at a disciplinary hearing shall take place with due regard to the considerations of justice and fairness.

#### **E. APPEAL:**

A learner has the right to appeal against any disciplinary action. The appeal must be made within seven working days to a person so designated who is higher in the hierarchy than the Chairperson of the Enquiry. The appeal shall be in the form of a review of all the evidence.

Parents and the child will be asked to sign the copy of the Code of Conduct in the Agenda/Communication Books annually.



**Code of Behaviour at Bellavista School**

**Disciplinary Code for Learners**

Expected Conduct	Misdemeanour	Consequences
Learners will comply with the general instructions and rules at Bellavista School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Deliberately disobeying instructions;</li> <li>B. Disrespect towards elders, educators, parents and visitor</li> <li>C. Incorrect uniform, including outrageous hair styles, incorrect dress code and other items</li> <li>D. Behaviour in public or at events that brings the school into disrepute</li> <li>E. Trespassing or entering the school after hours</li> <li>F. Improper use of IT rules by viewing, downloading or storing offensive material (e.g. on mobile devices, etc.)</li> <li>G. Cellphones misused for irregular communication and/ or any purpose other than school work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBD - warning</li> <li>TBD - warning</li> <li>TBD - warning</li> <li>DBD - Parental contact and warning</li> <li>DBD - Parental contact and warning</li> <li>PBD – Suspension/Expulsion (Disciplinary Hearing)</li> <li>DBD - Parental contact and warning</li> </ul>
Learners will behave responsibly and not endanger the safety and well being of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Playing dangerous games</li> <li>B. Bullying others including cyber bullying that is deemed representative of the school's reputation</li> <li>C. Fighting or threatening to hit others</li> <li>D. Having a weapon at school</li> <li>E. Disruptive behaviour which interrupt lessons</li> <li>F. Having alcohol or cigarettes at school</li> <li>G. Having any banned substance at school or flaunting/ promoting the use of any substance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DBD - Community Service</li> <li>PBD - Suspension/Expulsion (Disciplinary Hearing)</li> <li>DBD - Community Service (Dis Hearing)</li> <li>PBD - Suspension/Expulsion (Disciplinary Hearing)</li> <li>TBD - Warning</li> <li>PBD - Suspension/Expulsion (Disciplinary Hearing)</li> <li>PBD - Suspension/Expulsion (Disciplinary Hearing)</li> </ul>
Learners respect and care for the school's property and the property of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Tampering with other people's belongings</li> <li>B. Vandalism</li> <li>C. Littering</li> <li>D. Not taking good care of school books and textbooks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBD - Warning</li> <li>DBD - Community Service (Dis Hearing)</li> <li>TBD - Warning</li> <li>TBD - Warning</li> </ul>

Learners will be courteous towards and respect their peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Swearing and using offensive language</li> <li>B. Teasing and name calling</li> <li>C. Disrespect towards the religious convictions of others</li> <li>D. Racism</li> <li>E. Sexual Harassment</li> <li>F. Having pornography at school in any form (including on a mobile device)</li> <li>G. Failure to attend compulsory sporting and school events without prior excuse</li> </ul>	<p>TBD - Warning  TBD - Warning  DBD - Community Service (Dis Hearing)  PBD - Suspension/Expulsion (Disciplinary Hearing)  PBD - Suspension/Expulsion (Disciplinary Hearing)  PBD - Suspension/Expulsion (Disciplinary Hearing)  TBD - Warning</p>
Learners will be punctual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. No note explaining absenteeism</li> <li>B. Leaving the school property in school hours without permission</li> <li>C. Arriving late to school</li> <li>D. Leaving class without permission</li> </ul>	<p>TBD - Warning  DBD - Warning    TBD - Warning  TBD - Warning</p>
Learners will be diligent in their school work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Homework not done</li> <li>B. Not returning reply slips</li> <li>C. Leaving books or work at home</li> </ul>	<p>TBD - Warning  TBD - Warning  TBD - Warning</p>
Learners will behave honestly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Cheating in tests</li> <li>B. Copying others' work</li> <li>C. Lying</li> <li>D. Stealing</li> <li>E. Forging a signature</li> </ul>	<p>DBD - Warning  TBD - Warning  TBD - Warning  DBD - Warning, parent contact, police  DBD - Warning, parent contact</p>

## BELLAVISTA SCHOOL POLICY ON HIV/AIDS FOR LEARNERS AND EMPLOYEES

### Preamble:

In keeping with the international standards and in accordance with education law and the constitutional guarantees of the right to basic education, the right not to be unfairly discriminated against, the right to life and bodily integrity, the right to privacy, the right to freedom of access to information and the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion, the right to freedom of association, the right to a safe environment and the best interests of a child, the following policy shall constitute national policy.

A great deal of work has already been completed in the formulation of HIV/AIDS policies in schools. When compiling this policy, many of these existing policies and other valuable resources have been taken into account.

The following documents, in particular, proved to be very valuable:

- ISASA-HIV/AIDS Support for Teachers and Schools
- National Policy on HIV/AIDS for Learners and Educators in Public Schools
- Shree Bharat Shardra Mandir Policy Guidelines on HIV/AIDS (A policy drafted by Doctors and Lawyers representing the school)

The Shree Bharat Shardra Mandir Policy is a particularly sound document and it was included in the ISASA handbook. Permission has been granted to any member school to use part, or all of the policy.

### 1. Definitions:

- 1.1 'HIV' means the Human Immune Deficiency Virus
- 1.2 'AIDS' means the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome – that is the final phase of the HIV infection.
- 1.3 'Universal precautions' refers to the concept used worldwide in the context of HIV/AIDS to indicate the standard infection control procedures of precautionary measures aimed at the prevention of HIV transmission from one person to another and includes instructions concerning basic hygiene and wearing protective clothing such as rubber gloves.

### 2. Premises:

- 2.1 There are learners with HIV/AIDS in schools. These numbers are on the increase, as more and more children, who acquire HIV perinatally, with the necessary medical care, reach school going age.
- 2.2 HIV cannot be transmitted through the day to day social contact. The virus is transmitted through blood, semen, vaginal and cervical fluids and breast milk.
- 2.3 Due to the increase in infection rates, learners and employees with HIV/AIDS will increasingly form part of the population of schools and institutions.
- 2.4 It is impossible to know with certainty who has HIV/AIDS and who does not.
- 2.5 Compulsory disclosure of a learner or employees HIV/AIDS status is not advocated.

- 2.6 Both learners and employees alike, should be given the opportunity to lead as full a life as possible.
  - 2.7 Adherence to universal precautions at all times whilst at school is strongly advised.
  - 2.8 Learners should be educated about the rights concerning their own bodies to protect themselves against violence and inappropriate behaviour.
  - 2.9 The constitutional rights of all learners and employees must be protected on an equal basis.
  - 2.10 Learners and employees with infectious illnesses such as German measles, chicken pox or mumps should stay away from school to protect all other members of the school from becoming ill, especially those infected with the HIV virus.
  - 2.11 Learners and employees must receive education about HIV/AIDS on an ongoing basis. The education received by the learners should be age and context appropriate.
  - 2.12 Any employee educating learners about HIV/AIDS must feel at ease and be someone the learners can relate to.
  - 2.13 A framework would need to be developed to cater for the following:
    - First aid kits for every class and therapy room
    - Suitable staff training in dealing with potential risk situations eg bleeding/universal precautions
    - HIV/AIDS awareness workshops for all staff – teachers, therapists, administrative staff and auxiliary staff
    - Parent consultation and education as to what their children will be covering in their lessons during “Life Skills’ training.
    - Counseling skills training for existing staff
    - Trauma counseling for employees, learners and parents (death and dying)
    - ‘Caregiver’ training for support groups e.g. families
    - Budget considerations – covering for staff absences
3. Non discrimination and equality with regards to learners and employees with HIV/AIDS
    - 3.1 No learner or employee with or perceived to have HIV/AIDS may be unfairly discriminated against.
    - 3.2 Learners and employees with HIV/AIDS should be treated in a just, humane and life affirming way, taking into account the fears, objections and the rights of all parties affected – a fair and balanced stance is necessary in the interest of the school community.
    - 3.3 Any special measure required in respect of a learner or employee with HIV should be fair and justifiable in the light of medical facts, school or institution conditions, and must be financially feasible, considering a balancing of interests of the learner and employee with HIV/AIDS and those of other learners, employees and their parents.

4. HIV/AIDS testing: The admission of learners to Bellavista and the appointment of employees:
  - 4.1 No learner may be denied continued attendance at the school or an institution on account of his or her HIV/AIDS status or perceived HIV/AIDS status.
  - 4.2 No employee may be denied the right to teach or to be promoted on account of his or her HIV/AIDS status or perceived HIV/AIDS status. HIV/AIDS status may not be the reason for dismissal of an employee.
  - 4.3 Learners are expected to attend classes in accordance with school requirements for as long as they are able to function effectively and pose no medically significant risk to others at the school.
  - 4.4 If and when learners with HIV/AIDS become incapacitated through illness, or pose a risk to others at the school or an institution, the school or institution should make academic work available to them for study at home and parents should, where practically possible, be allowed to educate their children at home, at the request of the parents. All such arrangements are to be made by the parent in conjunction with the Management Team.
5. Disclosure of HIV/AIDS related information and confidentiality:
  - 5.1 No learner (or parent on behalf of a learner or student) or employee may be compelled to disclose his or her HIV/AIDS status to the school or institution or an employer, as the case may be.
  - 5.2 Genuine voluntary disclosure of HIV/AIDS is welcomed and encouraged. In the event of voluntary disclosure, it may be in the best interests of a learner with HIV/AIDS if a member of the Management Team of the school is informed of his or her HIV/AIDS status, either by the learner or by the learner's parent(s).
  - 5.3 Any person to whom any information about the medical condition of a learner, or employee with HIV/AIDS has been divulged is expected to keep this information confidential.
  - 5.4 Disclosures to third parties may nevertheless be authorised with the informed consent of the learner (if the learner is above the age of 14 years), or by written consent of the employee, or as is justified by statutory or legal authorisation, or necessity, as would be in the case of an emergency.
6. Safe Bellavista environment:
  - 6.1 Bellavista will implement universal precautions to effectively eliminate the risk of transmission of all blood-borne pathogens, including HIV, in the school environment, as far as is practical.
  - 6.2 The basis for advocating the consistent application for universal precautions lies in the assumption that in situations of potential exposure to HIV, all persons are potentially infected and all blood and body fluids and excretions, which could be contaminated with blood (for example, tears, saliva, mucus, phlegm, urine, vomit, faeces and pus) are therefore to be treated as potential infections.
  - 6.3 Blood, especially in large spills such as from nosebleeds, should be handled with extreme caution.

- 6.4 Skin exposed accidentally to blood could be cleaned promptly with water and disinfectant, in every instance.
- 6.5 All bleeding wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes and open skin lesions should be cleaned immediately with a suitable antiseptic such as hypochlorite (for instance bleach or Milton), 2% gluteraldehyde (for instance Cider), organic iodines, or 7R% alcohol (for instance ethyl alcohol or isopropyl alcohol).
- 6.6 If there is a biting or scratching incident where the skin is broken, the wound should be washed thoroughly with running water and disinfectant.
- 6.7 Blood splashes on the face (mucous membranes of eyes, nose or mouth) should be flushed with running water for at least three minutes.
- 6.8 All open wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes and open skin lesions should be covered securely with non porous or waterproof dressing or plaster so that there is no risk of exposure to blood.
- 6.9 Cleansing and washing should always be done with running water and not in containers of water. Where running tap water is not available, containers should be used to pour water over the area to be cleansed.
- 6.10 All persons attending to blood spills, open wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes, open skin lesions, body fluids and excretions should wear protective latex gloves to exclude the risk of HIV transmission effectively. However, emergency treatment should not be delayed because gloves are not available. Bleeding can be managed by compression with material that will absorb the blood, for example a towel. However, people who have skin lesions should not attempt to give first aid when no latex gloves are available.
- 6.11 If blood has contaminated a surface, that surface should be cleaned with fresh, clean, bleach solution and the person responsible for this should wear latex gloves. Other body fluids and excretions that could be contaminated with blood (for instance tears, saliva, mucus, phlegm, urine, vomit, faeces and pus) should be cleaned up in similar fashion.
- 6.12 Blood contaminated materials should be sealed in a plastic bag and incinerated or sent to an appropriate disposal firm.
- 6.13 If instruments (for instance scissors) become contaminated with blood or other body fluids, they should be washed, placed in a strong bleach solution for at least one hour before drying and re-use.
- 6.14 At least two first aid kits, each of which contains the following should be available upon the school premises and accessible from the playground and sports field:
  - Two large and two medium pairs of disposable latex gloves
  - Two large and two medium pairs of rubber household gloves for handling blood soaked material in specific instances (for example when broken glass makes the use of latex gloves inappropriate)

- Absorbent material, waterproof plasters, disinfectant (such as hypochlorite), scissors, cotton wool, gauze tape, tissues, containers for water and a resuscitation mouth piece or similar device with which mouth to mouth resuscitation could be applied without contact being made with blood or other body fluids.

6.15 Universal precautions are in essence, barriers to prevent contact with blood or body fluids. Adequate barriers can also be established by using less sophisticated devices than those described in above, such as:

- Unbroken plastic packets for indoor and outdoor use on hands where latex or rubber gloves are not available, and
- Common household bleach for use as disinfectant, diluted one part to nine parts water (1:9 solution), made up as needed.

6.16 All learners and employees, including sports coaches, should be given appropriate information and training on HIV transmission, the application of universal precautions and the importance of adherence thereto.

6.17 Learners should be instructed never to touch the blood. Open wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes and open skin lesions of others, or to handle emergencies such as nosebleeds, cuts and scrapes of friends on their own. They should be taught to call for the assistance of a staff member.

6.18 Parents of learners should be informed about the universal precautions that will be adhered to at a school or an institution.

7. Prevention of HIV transmission during play and sport considering:

7.1 The risk of HIV transmission as a result of contact play and contact sport is generally insignificant.

7.2 The risk increases when open wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes, open skin lesions or mucous membranes of learners and employees without HIV are exposed to infected blood.

7.3 Certain contact sports (such as rugby and boxing) may represent an increased risk of HIV transmission.

7.4 Adequate wound management, in the form of the application of universal precautions is essential to contain the risk of HIV transmission during contact play and contact sport.

**Therefore:**

7.5 No learner may participate in contact play or contact sport with an open wound, sore, break in the skin, graze or open skin lesion.

7.6 If bleeding occurs during contact play or contact sport, the injured player should be taken off the playground or sports field immediately and appropriately treated. Only then may the player resume playing and only for as long as any open wound, sore, break in the skin, graze or open

skin lesion remains securely covered.

7.7 Soiled clothes must be changed.

7.8 The same precautions should be applied to injured staff members and injured spectators.

7.9 Sports participants, including coaches, with HIV/AIDS should preferably seek medical counseling before participating in sport, in order to assess risks to their own health as well as the risk of HIV transmission to other participants.

7.10 Staff members acting as sports administrators, managers and coaches should ensure the availability of first aid kits and the adherence to universal precautions in the event of bleeding during sport participation

7.11 Incidence of contact:

- Should an incident occur at Bellavista where a person comes into contact with someone who is, or may potentially be HIV positive, Bellavista shall take reasonable steps to assist the individual:
  - 1) Provide information to the affected adult/child on procedures that will need to be followed.
  - 2) Ensure that all testing is carried out in accordance with Section 7(2) of the Employment Equity Act (employee) and that the parents/guardians of a minor involved in a contact incident, be informed in order to proceed with testing.

7.12 Liability:

Should a transmission of the virus occur, the school cannot be held liable. Various precautionary measures have been put into place to reduce the risk of transmission.

- Staff and learners educated
- Universal safety precautions adhered to
- Correct First Aid procedures/wound management/cleaning of blood spills/disposal of contaminated materials in place as per this policy.

8. Education on HIV/AIDS at Bellavista:

8.1 A continuing HIV/AIDS education programme must be implemented to all Bellavista learners, educators and other staff members.

8.2 Age appropriate education on HIV/AIDS must form part of the curriculum for all learners should be integrated in the life skills education programme for pre primary, primary and secondary school learners. This should include the following:

- Providing information on HIV/AIDS in South Africa and developing the life skills necessary for the prevention of these;
- Inculcating from an early age onwards, basic first aid principles, including how to deal with bleeding;
- Emphasising the role of drugs, sexual abuse and violence in the transmission of HIV;



- Encouraging learners and students to make use of health care, counselling and support service (including services relating to reproductive health care and the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases) offered by community service organisations and other disciplines;
  - Teaching learners and students how to behave towards persons with HIV/AIDS
  - Cultivating an enabling environment and a culture of non discrimination towards persons and HIV/AIDS; and
  - Providing information on appropriate prevention and avoidance measures including abstinence from sexual intercourse, the use of condoms and the application of universal precautions.
- 8.3 Education and information regarding HIV/AIDS must be given in an accurate and scientific manner and in language and terms that are understandable.
- 8.4 Parents of learners must be informed about all HIV/AIDS education offered at the school and institution, the learning content and methodology to be used as well as values that will be imparted. They should be invited to participate in parental guidance sessions and should be made aware of their role as sexuality educators and imparters of values at home.
9. Duties and responsibilities of learners, employees and parents:
- 9.1 All learners and employees should respect the right of other learners and employees.
- 9.2 It should be emphasized that the ultimate responsibility for a learner's behaviour rests with his or her parents. Parents of all learners:
- Are expected to require learners to observe all rules aimed at preventing behaviour which may create the risk of HIV transmission;
  - Are encouraged to take an active interest in acquiring any information or knowledge on HIV/AIDS supplied by the school or institution and to attend meetings convened for them by the Board of Governors.
- 9.3 It is recommended that a learner or employee with HIV/AIDS and his or her parents, in the case of learners, should obtain medical opinion to assess whether the learner or employee, owing to his or her condition or conduct, poses a medically recognised significant health risk to others. If such a risk is established, the Principal of the school and the Chairman of the Board of Governors must be informed. The Principal of the school, after consulting with the Chairman of the Board of Governors, must take the necessary steps to ensure the health and safety of all the other learners and staff members.
- 9.4 Employees have a particular duty to ensure that the rights and dignity of all learners and other employees are respected, protected and promoted.
10. Refusal to study with or teach a learner with HIV/AIDS or to work with an employee with HIV/AIDS:
- 10.1 Refusal to study with a learner or to work with an employee with or perceived to have HIV/AIDS

should be pre-empted by providing accurate and understandable information on HIV/AIDS to all employees as well as to learners and their parents.

10.2 Nevertheless, learners who refuse to study with a fellow learner, or employees who refuse to work with a fellow employee or to teach/treat a learner with or perceived to have HIV/AIDS, should be counselled.

10.3 The situation should be resolved by the Principal and employees and, if necessary, with the assistance of the Board of Governors of the institution in accordance with the principles contained in this policy.

## 11. Employment Policies:

### 11.1 Bellavista's position regarding HIV testing:

Bellavista will not require an employee or any applicant for employment to undertake a HIV test to ascertain their HIV status. This can only be done if authorization has been obtained from the Labour Court. This includes HIV/AIDS testing.

- During application for employment
- As a condition of employment
- During termination of employment
- As an eligibility requirement for training of staff development programmes
- As an access requirement to obtain employee benefits

### 11.2 Employees Benefits:

- An employee with HIV/AIDS may not be discriminated again in the allocation of benefits
- An employee who becomes ill with AIDS should be treated like any other employee with a life threatening illness with regards to employee benefits
- Any information on an employees records should be kept confidential

## 12. Performance management:

### 12.1 Managing HIV positive employees:

- HIV employees should continue to work as normal as long as they are medically fit to do so
- An employee with HIV/AIDS is expected to meet the same performance requirements that apply to other employees
- Criteria for dealing with absenteeism, sick leave, transfer to lighter duties, ill health, early retirement and counselling will need to be included in procedures for employment assessment and management
- Employees with HIV/AIDS are entitled to the same amount of sick leave as other employees. A joint investigation by employer and employees should be taken to consider any extra time required.

### 12.2 Dismissal:

- Employees with HIV/Aids may not be dismissed solely on the basis of their HIV status

- An employee who is too sick to continue working can be dismissed because they lack the capacity to perform the key aspects of their position. The provisions of the Labour Relations Act should be followed. These include attempts to adapt the employees duties, to accommodate the employees disability and within reason, to find alternative employment for the employee.

### 12.3 Grievance Procedures:

As per existing staff code of conduct and employment conditions.

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## **IS MY CHILD READY TO MAINSTREAM?**

This question is often asked by Bellavista parents. The staff of Bellavista have compiled this document so that you, as parents, are aware of what the school look for when identifying the child who is ready to mainstream.

Your child may or may not fulfil all the requirements for mainstreaming. As a staff, we have to consider that your child is an individual with his/her own strengths and weaknesses. We take into consideration:

The Academic Profile: (This includes academic results, performance within the class, attitude to homework, work tempo (pace), emotional resilience etc)

The child ready to mainstream should be able to:

- maintain concentration until work is complete
- complete extra work
- listen to and carry out instructions
- complete homework responsibly
- work independently, individually or within a group, as a co-operative member
- cope with the pace of work (does not get left behind, work is up to date)
- test at a standardised level (on age or grade level or above)
- work at a standard higher than our class average
- be well organised regarding tasks and possessions and time management
- be able to cope with large class numbers
- participate orally
- persevere
- use skills/strategies taught in an integrated manner

The Social Profile:

The child who is ready to mainstream should:

- display good interpersonal relationships with peers and teacher
- be helpful and kind to others
- show leadership qualities
- be able to make and sustain friendships
- be aware of social norms and act appropriately
- judge right from wrong
- be even tempered
- display good sportsmanship

- have appropriate behaviour
- be a responsible team member

#### Parental Involvement:

The child who is ready to mainstream obviously has a lot of positive intrinsic qualities, however, once integrated in a mainstream environment, hiccups may occur, we look for parents who:

- display involvement with the child's education whilst not smothering the child's independence
- are actively involved in incidental and structured learning
- are supportive of the child and the school
- consider whether therapy is necessary to carry the child over into a mainstream environment
- are knowledgeable, accepting and realistic with regard to their child's strengths and weaknesses
- are willing to be a role model
- can provide security
- set limits for their child
- will be supportive of the 'new' school
- are willing to consider different options for mainstream and have their child's best interest at heart
- are resilient to support their child

#### Mainstream Placement

When your child has been recognised as 'ready to mainstream' you will probably ask the following questions:

- will my child cope out there?
- has sufficient work been covered at Bellavista?
- is my child at the required standard?
- should my child repeat a grade when going back to mainstream?
- will my child make friends?
- should my child go back to the previous school?
- where to? (Placement)

As a staff we consider the following:

- would your child benefit from a boarding school placement or day school
- size of classes?
- coeducational or single sex school
- support given by school
- nurturing ethos of school
- understanding and empathy for children who have learning problems
- subject choices
- empathetic head and teachers
- fee structure
- location to child's home
- standard of work
- academic pressure, pace of work
- should siblings be in the same school?
- religious bias of school and the family's cultural/ religious beliefs
- extra mural activities

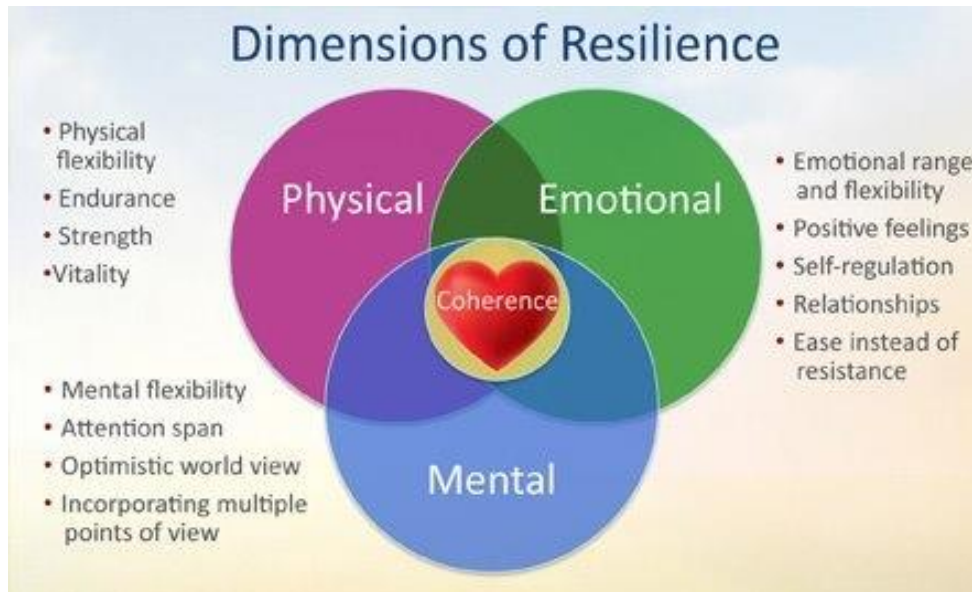
As reflected in this document, we assess each child according to individual strengths and weaknesses and try to suggest schools where your child would achieve the greatest degree of success (academically and socially). Please note we do not always recommend a return to your child's previous school. The suggestions are made

with the best interests of the child in mind.

The usual procedure for your child to be identified as a candidate for mainstreaming:

- teacher discusses child with the head of the school
- child is assessed
- child is case conferenced by all the educationalists involved with your child
- teacher mentions to the parents that there may be a possibility of your child mainstreaming
- parents set up an appointment with the Principal and discuss this possibility

### What is meant by ‘emotional resilience?’



### BELLAVISTA PARENTS OFTEN ASK

#### “Where will my child mainstream to, when they leave Bellavista?”

As a remedial primary school, Bellavista’s aim is to mainstream (return our children to regular schools) as soon as possible.

When a parent or future parent of Bellavista views the percentage of leavers’ information graphs, one needs to take into account the following variables:

- A percentage of our children are ready for a mainstream educational environment from Grade R – Grade 6.
- Our greatest number of leavers is always from our Grade 7 year, when our learners go on to high school. (Please refer to the statistical information pie charts on the types of schools our learners are mainstreamed to).
- The higher the overall percentage of school leavers will be directly related to the number of Grade 7’s in a particular year.
- Leavers may also leave Bellavista due to the parents being relocated, financial reasons, or the learners being an unsuitable candidate for Bellavista.

## Matriculation Results Past Bellavista School Pupils 2007

### IEB University Entrance

Tracey Knowles (Kingsmead)	Patrick Catchpole (Oakhill)
Cameron Brown (St. Johns)	Chris Croxton (St Stithians)
Kyle Miscia (St Davids)	Byron Rodrigues (St Davids)
Kegan Airey (St Davids)	Nic Sardiano (St Davids)
Bruno Rech (St Albans)	Chris McCormack (St Albans)
David Harty (St Peters)	Brett Atkinson (St Peters)
Jordan Chiltern (Redhill)	Michael Rebelo
Kevin Van Straaten	

### IEB Diploma

Grant Aitken (St Davids)	
Jonathan Shapiro (King David)	Ross Gariepy (St Davids)
Lawrence Bonin (King David)	Simone Shapiro (King David)
Bryerly Nassif (St Stithians)	Paul Ryan (St Stithians)
Warren Guedes (St Andrews)	Eve Kuster (Kingsmead)

### GDE University entrance

Brett Judnick (Crawford)  
David Silva (Distinction: Computer Application Technology) Eden College  
Camilla Rose Smith (Distinctions: English, Drama, Life orientation) Reddam  
Gavin Carter (Distinctions: Maths Literacy) Bryanston High

### Diploma

Dylan Hadassin (Distinction: Maths Literacy) Abbots College  
Chloe Whitford  
Andrew Howie King Edward

## Matriculation Results Past Bellavista School Pupils 2008

### IEB University Entrance

Michael Jarvis	St Albans
Luke Madden	St Albans
Daniel Alkalay	King David
Ilan Segal	King David
Megan Wilson	King David (Distinction Maths.Literacy)
Gabi Michelow	King David
Joshua Pinnock	St Stithians (Distinction: Maths Literacy)
Dylan Kruger	St Stithians (Distinction: Maths Literacy)
Nicholas Connock	St Andrews (Distinction: Design & Life Orientation)
Richard Damant	St Andrews (Distinction: Maths Literacy)
Danielle Dunkley	St Marys
Imogen Arroyo	St Marys
Laura Miller	St Marys (Distinction: Life Orientation & Maths.Literacy)
Gila Bartkunsky	Yeshiva (8 distinctions)

### Diploma

Courtney Townsend          Epworth School, Natal  
Garath Ramsey                Treverton

### GDE University Entrance

Megan Beatty                Parktown Girls  
Olivia Thorsen                Blue Mountains School  
Nicholas Lambrianos        Closing the Gap

### Higher Certificate

Andrew Hafner                Closing the Gap  
Talia Pitum                    Eden College (Distinction Visual Arts)

### Matriculation Results Past Bellavista School Pupils 2009

#### IEB University Entrance

Douglas Furbank (Beaulieu College)  
David Melrose (St Peters College)  
Gregory Horsfall ( St David's Maritz Brothers) Distinction Maths  
Mickey Joubert (St Stithians Boy's College)  
David Lazarus (King David Victory Park)  
David Frame ( St. John's College)  
Georgina Harris (St Mary's School)  
Chelsea Ann Ingledew ( Kingsmead College) 3 distinctions: Art, Drama Maths  
Caitlin Hall (St Peters College)  
Emma Thomson ( St Anne's Natal) 3 distinctions

#### IEB Diploma

Michael Anagnostu  
Jake Andrews  
Ross England  
Sara Leibenberg

#### National Senior Certificate University Entrance

Walter Degenhardt (Bryanston High)  
Mark Dickinson (Bishops Cape Town)  
Natassja Kean ( Abbots College)  
National Senior Certificate Diploma  
Dean Holden  
Devon Miles  
Jaimee Shapiro

### Matriculation Results Past Bellavista School Pupils 2010

#### University Entrance IEB

Jenay Bernstein (Beaulieu College)  
Patrick Beiber (De la Salle College)  
Mary Bishop (St Mary's School) , Distinction Consumer Studies  
David Young (Bishop Bavin)

Tristan Hannaford: (Holy Rosary Convent)  
Cherise Blanden  
Katy Fraser Valentine (DSG Grahamstown)  
Mpumi Nhleko (Michaelhouse)  
Samantha Jacquet (Holy Rosary Convent), Distinction Maths Literacy  
Matsi Sono (St. David's)  
Nicholas Davidson (St Andrews Grahamstown)

#### Higher Certificate IEB

Matthew Lowe (Michaelhouse)  
Andrew Lever (St. Andrew's Grahamstown)  
James de Villiers (Hilton) Distinction English  
Robert de Villiers (Hilton) Distinctions: Accounting, Geography, Life Orientation, Mathematics, Physical Science  
Tiisetso Matlotlo (Sacred Heart)  
Andrew Murray (St. John's College)  
Yaron Sher (King David Linksfield)  
Jared Solomon (DeLa Salle College)  
Perry Stevens (St. Albans)  
Ian Stevens (St. Albans) Distinctions: Accounting, Mathematics, Information Technology, Life Orientation  
Jared Surtees (St. Peter's College)  
Warwick Vlantis (St. Alban's) Distinction Life Orientation

#### Matriculation Results Past Bellavista School Pupils 2011

#### IEB University Entrance

Stuart Alexander  
Matthew Finke  
Aymeric Roulier  
Dustin Wynne  
Cassandra Otto  
Nadia Czuba Distinctions in Life Orientation & Mathematical Literacy  
Robin Van Aardt  
James Warsop NSC pass entry to Diploma Studies  
Asher Nassif NSC pass entry to Diploma Studies  
Joanne Kelly Labuschagne NSC pass entry to Diploma Studies

#### GDE

Richard Bredahl NSC pass entry to Diploma Studies  
Nicholas Humphries NSC pass entry to Diploma Studies  
Pupils overseas: Jordan Gillen and Thomas Zaloumis

#### Matriculation Results Past Bellavista School Pupils 2012

Matthew Argo (Distinction Maths Literacy)  
Mark Brown  
Kyle Harrison  
Joseph Throssel  
Jonathan Levin (Distinctions in Geography and Life Orientation)



Allesandro Manzoni  
Ethan Ruso (Distinction Maths Literacy)  
Max Weir  
Callan Barrat Gibson (Distinction Life Orientation)  
Brayden Solomon (Distinction Maths Literacy)  
Guilia Maraschin (Distinctions in Geography, Life Orientation, Life Sciences, Mathematics)  
Shannon McCormac  
Mitchell Tappe (Distinction in Maths Literacy)  
Jesse Oliveira (Distinction in Maths Literacy)

#### GDE

Saskian Abkarian Distinction in Life Orientation  
Nirali Ambaram Distinction in Life Orientation

#### Matriculation Results Past Bellavista School Pupils 2013

IEB University Entrance  
Michael Jarvis  
Luke Madden  
Daniel Alkalay  
Ilan Segal  
Megan Wilson (Distinction Maths Lit)  
Gabi Michelow  
Joshua Pinnock (Distinction Maths Lit)  
Dylan Kruger (Distinction Maths Lit)  
Nicholas Connock (Distinction Design and Life Orientation)  
Richard Damant (Distinction Maths Lit)  
Danielle Dunkley  
Imogen Arroyo  
Laura Miller (Distinction Life Orientation and Maths Lit)  
Gila Bartkunsky (Yeshiva College – 8 distinctions)

#### Diploma

Courtney Townsend  
Gareth Ramsay

#### GDE University Entrance

Megan Beatty  
Olivia Thorsen  
Nicholas Lambrianos

#### GDE Higher Certificate

Andrew Hafner  
Talia Pitum

#### Matriculation Results Past Bellavista School Pupils 2014 (BD = University Entrance)

Berti, Matthew	BD
Bulbulia, Maseeha	BD
De Decker, Anthony	
Enslin, Jonty	BD

Erwin, Kyle:	BD	INTE
Fineberg, David		
Harvey, Tyron		
Howie, Tristan	BD	MLit
Kaplan, Chase	BD	MLit
Kean, Devon	BD	MLit
Laing, Jason	D	
Maartens, Yegen	BD	MLit
Meyer, Tineal	BD	
Morris, Declan		
Mukheiber, Tanner	BD	
Ndoro, Zorah		
Ntshingili, Menzi	BD	
Nyrininkindi, Moses	USA Ed	SYSTEM
Rech, Ivano	BD	
Sloane, Mark		
Thomas, Gareth	BD	ACC, BUSS, GEO, LIFO
Tighy, Gregory	BD	MLit
Williams, Melissa		
Tyers, Alex		
Young, Tyler	BD	MLit

Matriculation Results Past Bellavista School Pupils 2015 (BD = University Entrance)

Alkalay, Gilad	BD	LIFO
Barratt-Gibson, Carys	BD	CONS, LIFO, LISC, MLIT
Berry, Andrew		
Booker, Gareth	BD	GEOG, LIFO, MATH, PHYS
Campbell, Ross	D	
De Decker, Matthew	BD	MALI
Du Plessis, Michael	BD	
Durkan, Brandan	HC	MALI
Floyd, Cole	BD	GEOG, EGAD
Githae, Sam	BD	
Greig, Annabel	BD	
Guerra, Dario	BD	
Hodgson, Joshua	BD	
Isaacs, Joshua	BD	MALI
Ismail, Faatimah	BD	
Jackson, Gabriella		
Labuschagne, Rachel	BD	MALI
Marcus, Evan	BD	BUSS, LIFO
Morkel, Matthew		
Pitt, Jenna	BD	
Ridgway, Keegan	BD	
Ruso, Keren	D	
Sarmis, Kimon	BD	
Seach, James	BD	MALI
Sher, Amit		
Taylor, Liam	BD	LIFO

## **Past Learners Successes:**

This heading raises the question “What is Success? To some raising a family and being a supportive wife, is a success. To another person, success may be linked to being famous, owning a business, or making lots of money. Success is after all, whatever you want it to be ... ultimately success encapsulates the spirit of achieving one’s dreams. The difficulty with listing our past learners’ successes is, that as a primary school, we often lose contact with our ex learners and fail to hear of their achievements. The other difficulty is to choose who to put in and who to leave out of a list, as a vast amount of achievements do occur.

## **EXTRACTS OF LETTERS FROM PAST PARENTS**

“Thank you for taking such wonderful care of my daughter. We will both miss Bellavista!”

“We are delighted that our son is ready to move in mainstream education but at the same time we are extremely sad to be leaving Bellavista. Our five years at Bellavista have been interesting, challenging and wonderful! We are very grateful for all the growth and development that the school has facilitated in our son. We, as his parents, have also benefited from our time at the school – we have been inspired by your newsletters and assemblies, as well as the school’s evening talks. Bellavista espouses wonderful values of respect and empathy and teaches such important life skills – we will all do our best to continue to use ‘Feelings of Challenge’ and ‘Feeling of Competence’ in our lives! Alison, you are an amazing leader of an incomparable school which will always have a special in our hearts. Thank you so much”.

“It is with both sadness and joy that we write this letter. We are so overjoyed with the decision to let our son mainstream next year and have full confidence that he will excel. While sad to see him leave we know the foundation and the morals you have instilled in him will stand him in good stead for the rest of his life. I want to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for what you have all done in moulding our son the last six years. It is deeply and sincerely appreciated”.

“Our son has been elected as a prefect by his school for Grade 7. About 10 boys are selected in September each year. This endorsement means so, so much more to those boys that do not regularly clean up all the accolades. On the academic front, our son started at the very bottom of the ladder. He scored 26% for his first Maths test in 2013 but has finished this year on 79%. He also recently scored the highest mark in his year for a science project. Thank you for providing our young man with such an extremely solid foundation from which he has now reached stratospheric heights in a very short time.”

“We would like to express our profound gratitude to Bellavista School for all the support provided to our son since he joined the school in 2010. Our son could hardly construct a sentence when he first arrive, but is much better now. We have seen a lot of growth in many areas. I would like to thank Mrs Scott, teachers past and present, and everyone else at school who has touched our son’s life and helped him to be the boy he is today.”

“Our son has been so privileged to attend Bellavista and we will definitely miss all the staff and friends.”

“Before Andrew arrived at Bellavista, I had begun to feel that the teaching profession was no longer the caring profession that it is supposed to be, so what a gratifying experience it was to discover that Bellavista embodies everything that we should expect from a good school”.

“The reason for my call and this letter was to thank you, your staff and all at Bellavista for everything you did for Pippa when she was a learner at your school. You gave her the courage to believe in herself and the confidence to set goals and press on until she achieves them”.

“We would like to take this opportunity of thanking you and your dedicated staff for all the assistance, time and support in overcoming the obstacles Dean encountered during his school career”.

“I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation for the time and effort put into Tyron’s academic progress by you and your team. I don’t think Tyron or I have encountered anyone who has made such a positive contribution. You gave Tyron stability and structure, alleviated many of my anxieties and fears in a compassionate, empathetic and professional way”.

“A very special thank you for all you have done for us and Ryan. I can hardly believe that five years ago two very tearful parents sat in your office while you told us that Bellavista was the place for our son. We have sure come a long way since then. Thank you for all your love and care and wishing you all the very best for years to come”.

“So I hope you know that when I say ‘Thanks for being you’, I mean it sincerely, I mean it from the heart”.

“We would like to say good bye and thank you for all the support, care and teaching you have given Joshua during his time at your very special school. Our lives have changed because of this time and as we leave to start a new life in KZN we know that Joshua is going to cope so much better because of what the staff at Bellavista have equipped him with and for this we will always be grateful. We wish you happiness and continued success in the very special work that you do”.

“Words would not adequately describe our gratitude to all of you and the joy we have known in our time spent here. This little school has big hearts, big ideas and spends large amounts of time on the little people who would, otherwise, sink into the big abyss of the world – and probably drown. Thank you for the big wings you have given our son Gregory to help him both float and soar. Our hearts and minds will never be the same again. Thank you!”

## **LETTERS FROM PARENTS OF CHILDREN AT BELLAVISTA**

Dear Alison and the Bellavista Family

An Inspirer. An Empower. An Engager. A leader. These characteristics are just a short sample of the many you & the team at Bellavista demonstrated with Matthew, including me, every single day at Bellavista.

Thank you for empowering me to change my perception of the challenges Matthew faced in his daily school routine.

I still recall the day, when St Johns informed me that Matthew would benefit from a school at Bellavista. At the time I felt devastated, thinking “Matthew” was going to missing out. Now I would advocate for every child, to have the opportunity to be surrounded by a Bellavista school team. The safety net of learning, an environment of love and support.

I am grateful to you and the team who supported Matthew, myself and our family through these past 4 years. Matthew has grown into a confident young man, who has many talents which he has harnessed over the years. How I wish as a parent, I could take you all on the next journey with us at St Johns. But alas this will not be the case. I know in my heart you have given him the tools he needs to embrace his new school and the challenges ahead.

Thank you for being genuine. Thank you for seeing us (the parents) as partners in Matthews learning and sharing. Thank you for being great teachers. May you inspire others to achieve the greatness you have at

Bellavista.

Matthew & I will truly miss you all.

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Dear Alison, Teachers and Therapists

It is with a heavy heart I write this email and many tears.

I am confirming that Danella Cassel will be leaving Bellavista school at the end of this calendar year being 2015.

We were introduced to the school through the Assessment Centre in May of 2012 and on visiting the school Danella instinctively said to me she wanted to go to Bellavista school.

Before we came to Bellavista it was all about what Danella couldn't do and as one of her nursery school teacher's said she needed to be with children who were on her "level" which was not the level expected for her age. Danella is our eldest child and we thought the world of her ; so this was hard to swallow.

Once we joined Bella Vista it was all about what she could do, what she was good at, how wonderful and creative she was. We learn't from Miriam in Grade R it was all about the child learning in her own time when she was ready. It was all about the individual and her learning style. Miriam once told me that she told the Grade R's to draw the story of Pinocchio. Danella of course drew a picture of a girl with long hair. Miriam said to her but why did you draw this and Danella's response was that when the girl lied her hair grew. This was okay and Miriam applauded her individuality and creativity.

Grade 1 was more challenging from a learning perspective. Mrs Wetterhahn was very supportive and available with regard to Danella. She taught us many things like being diligent with our homework; tolerance of others and to be disciplined . Danella started reading quickly we were really relieved with her progress. We loved the school concert " the night of the stars". The teacher's and therapists practiced for months and put in loads of effort. Danella was thrilled to be on stage and it was all about giving each child a chance to shine. She learned that practice makes perfect. We were introduced to the Cognitive Enrichment Advantage programme which gave us a strategy for learning and we started using the method in our everyday lives.

In grade 2 the work was a bit harder but we were on top of our homework. Mrs Clark had a fresh approach to learning and her main concern was that Danella was happy at school. She always reminded me of Danella's abilities and strengths. Danella learn 't to dance the continental drift and suddenly from not being able to move she suddenly got some rhythm. She loved the early morning modulation sessions and snoozelin room.

The support Danella got from Chloe who was her remedial teacher for the last two years has been enormous. I really feel Danella learned to apply herself and enjoyed her special time with Chloe.

To all the therapists that have worked with Danella over the past 3 year your contribution is appreciated.

We have loved being part of the Bellavista family and we have made wonderful lifelong friendships.

The one thing that stands out for me about the school is the respect the children have for their teachers and Mrs Scott. They are scared to step out of line and go to the principal yet I have witnessed many children including Danella hugging Mrs Scott. "No hat no play " Danella has felt safe and thrived on this disciplined yet nurturing environment. Danella is so proud of her school and often sings the school anthem.

It has been a huge shock to Danella to have to leave the only school she feels is home. She even threatened at one stage to go speak to Mrs Scott and convince her to let her stay. She is leaving with a lot of confidence.

After the past few months we have come to terms with having to leave and applauding Danella's achievements. We are confident that Danella will be ready for the next journey and we leave having many fond

memories and lessons learnt.

Mrs Scott, teachers and therapists thank you for looking after our child so well and getting her ready for the big world out there. What a special school we will miss walking through the corridors but won't say goodbye as we will visit.

Danella loves nature and always enjoyed playing in the school's garden so we would like to donate R5 000 to the school and hope you will purchase something for the garden.

Many Thanks

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There is no better feeling in the world than knowing your child is in the right school. We dropped off a frazzled, anxious and scared little boy in June. To now having a child who is excited to go to school each day, feels he can do everything given to him and with a constant smile on his face. For the first time in his schooling history we walked out of a parent feedback session, feeling relieved and proud rather than being told about the teachers concerns and the things he can't do. We can't thank you all enough for all the love, patience and care you have shown towards our son and us. We initially were hesitant and worried about moving to another school with new teachers, parents and ethos. But now that we are in we never want to leave! We are so blessed to be a part of such an incredible school and thank you for everything you do.

When my daughter, Michelle started at Bellavista, I felt as if I had failed as a mother. Maybe if I had read more bedtime stories she would not have had a problem. We started looking at other members of the family to see if the problem was perhaps inherited.

We also asked ourselves, had we done the right thing to move her. Because once she moved she became even more unhappy and also became ill. By now we were almost at the end of the term (we joined in August) and one afternoon she came home and asked me to get a list of the class telephone numbers – I do believe that was when we all saw the light – and have never look back since.

Today she is a confident, happy girl, who can read (not that she enjoys it much) learn on her own, and is able to organise her homework. To put things into a nutshell, my daughter has found her self worth and as she would say "There is life after being a failure".

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I am a parent who became aware when my child was in Nursery School that he was 'different' and would need special education. It was suggested to me that I try to get him into Bellavista as it was such an excellent school. From my first phone call I wanted him there and probably made a nuisance of myself for pushing and pushing for him to be accepted. I was scared that he would not be good enough for Bellavista as I had heard they do not accept all children with learning difficulties. I was so relieved when he was accepted and have never looked back since.

We are proud to have him here and know that he is above all, happy, not stressed and coping at the pace best suited to his needs

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I am very happy that our son got accepted at Bellavista School. The teachers are understanding and caring

and are always there to share and deal with problems. We feel confident that he is very content and happy at Bellavista School.

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When our son was at his previous school I felt such an outsider as he did physiotherapy and O.T. in the afternoon. We felt isolated. Coming to Bellavista, the atmosphere was so friendly we were encouraged. Here at Bellavista I was able to share my problems with other mums and not feel bad about it. To discover there were other mums out there whose children have similar problems was such a relief.

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We felt quite devastated about our son leaving a 'regular' school environment and initially it was difficult to accept. However, we were very relieved that we had finally taken a positive step to remedy the problems being experienced. He was finally in an environment with the necessary support systems in place, alleviating much anxiety.

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I was shattered at the psychiatrist's recommendation of remedial schooling with O.T. and Speech Therapy. I thought we could 'get away with' mainstream education and O.T. and Speech Therapy privately. I was also concerned that I may have been responsible in some way for Teresa's situation. I thought 'OK, we will go for it, but of course, it will be temporary and she will be out of here – 2 years at the most'. Teresa has now been at Bellavista for seven years.

We have grown tremendously during this time. There have been times of great pain and great joy. I stopped wondering about how much time she would have to spend at the school and began instead to watch her grow in confidence from year to year, through new experiences and her improved abilities. She is emerging as a child with greater impulse control, organisational abilities and her concentration has improved dramatically.

Bellavista, with its specialist staff, has provided an environment that has allowed Teresa to grow at her own pace. She is now ready to leave and to utilise those hard won skills that she has acquired at Bellavista.

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## **EXCERPTS FROM LEARNERS LEAVING BELLAVISTA SCHOOL**

My journey at Bellavista all began  
In grade 4 – I was told that I can  
I was made to feel welcome, there was a warm atmosphere  
And I knew that my potential – I would achieve over here  
For the past 4 years Bellavista has been my home  
I wouldn't change it for the world within myself I have grown  
I have met the most incredible people and friends – I have gained a lot  
Thank you to my amazing teachers, and a huge huge thank you to the inspirational Mrs Scott!

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An Inspirer. An Empower. An Engager. A leader. These characteristics are just a short sample of the many you

& the team at Bellavista demonstrated with our son, including me, every single day at Bellavista.

Thank you for empowering me to change my perception of the challenges Matthew faced in his daily school routine.

I still recall the day, when St Johns informed me that our son would benefit from a school at Bellavista. At the time I felt devastated, thinking "he" was going to miss out. Now I would advocate for every child, to have the opportunity to be surrounded by a Bellavista school team. The safety net of learning, an environment of love and support.

I am grateful to you and the team who supported my son, myself and our family through these past 4 years. He has grown into a confident young man, who has many talents which he has harnessed over the years. How I wish as a parent, I could take you all on the next journey with us at St Johns. But alas this will not be the case. I know in my heart you have given him the tools he needs to embrace his new school and the challenges ahead.

Thank you for being genuine. Thank you for seeing us (the parents) as partners in our sons learning and sharing. Thank you for being great teachers. May you inspire others to achieve the greatness you have at Bellavista.

We will truly miss you all.

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## **WELCOME LETTER FROM BELLAVISTA LEARNERS**

"Good morning Mrs Scott, teachers, friends and new friends to this school. I came to Bellavista in 2011 at the beginning of Grade 3. And I was happy to be here. Before Bellavista I felt invisible. There were 28 children in my class and when I asked a question my teacher couldn't hear me. I knew I was not in the right place. My mom knew it too and was trying very hard to get me a place in Bellavista but that's a whole other story. So we battled and waited.

From day one at Bellavista I felt OK. I belonged. My teacher, Miss Teichman, could hear me when I put up my hand and asked a question. I had friends. All that just on day one. This was the place for me. I knew that I had found my place in the sun – a place where I would learn and grow – a place where the sun was going to shine very brightly on me.

Some of the things I like best about Bellavista is that it is a small environment. The classes are small with only 13 or 14 children in the class. Everyone knows each other – from Grade 0 to Grade 7. How often do you find that in other schools? Here we learn things that they don't teach you in other schools too, like CEA tools. That means stuff like self-regulation, goal orientation, planning, thought integration, self-development and stop, think, go. I can't tell you that I am brilliant at all of the but I do try my best.

Even though school is serious I love it. We work hard but we have so much fun. I have great friends and the best teachers and I really believe that everyone who comes to Bellavista is very lucky."

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I hope you like Bellavista. Bellavista is a nice school, the subjects are nice, the teachers are nice. The P.E. lessons are a lot of fun. Sometimes they can be boring at times. We have art at Bellavista, music, Bible Ed. The Bible College students who are teaching us are very funny and are a lot of fun. We also have extra mural activities. When I first came to Bellavista I was surrounded by people I didn't know except for one. I had a



problem with a few subjects in the other subjects I was above average. In Grade Six I started to improve on the subjects I could not cope with. In Grade Six and Seven you have exams for four days.

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Welcome to Bellavista. I hope you will enjoy your time at Bellavista because I did. I was very happy here and next year I am going to a new school. We have quite nice sports during P.T. We play baseball, soccer, cricket and other sport for the girls are netball, swimming and tennis. I know how you feel like but have fun here at Bellavista.

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Welcome to Bellavista School. I know you will have a fantastic time at this school. The advantage the school has is it has extra murals twice a week and not once a week. The school also holds P.T. twice a week. It is also a peaceful school in quite a small environment. What the school does is it helps you with problems you are struggling with e.g. reading and writing. The school also does work a lot slower so you can understand and learn each subject well. The classes are also a lot smaller therefore it is easier to learn and also a lot easier to ask questions. Art is also a fun subject done during class time and can also be done as an extra mural.

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I came to Bellavista in Grade Five. I knew one girl in my class but the rest made me feel welcome. I am in Grade Seven now and I am leaving to go to another school. I am really sad to be leaving. The sports that girls can play are netball and swimming. There aren't many sports to choose from as there aren't much girls in our school. Welcome to Bellavista and enjoy it, 'cause I did.

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Welcome to Bellavista. There are two Grade Seven classes and the teachers are very good. I think anyone who comes to Bellavista will like it.

But I must warn you the work is very very difficult and the teachers are very strict and the head mistress is even stricter. But still it is a very nice school. I hope to see you there next year.

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## **A MOTHER'S ANGUISH**

Today Brenda and I cried together.

Our weekly chat about our children and their respective learning problems united us in our frustration and pain. Statistically, one in every four children has a learning problem, but I was never ready for the shame I felt, the guilt and sleepless nights. I am sure there are many mothers who will relate to my story and many teachers who will appreciate the insight they gain by reading it.

It has been written about the pain and belittling a child endures due to ignorance. A child with a learning problem is scared and frustrated and cross with the world, and although she is intelligent, she cannot achieve. The message she gets repeatedly is that she is a failure. Through my own research, I now know my shame was unnecessary, and understand how difficult it was for us as first time parents to identify and work towards solving the problem.

The school we had chosen for our daughter had a good reputation and high standard. In Grade One she showed steady progress and pleasing results. She was happy and confident. At the annual Christmas Pantomime we were amazed to see her join the adult cast of Jack and the Beanstalk with no hesitation at all. At the beginning of Grade Two she was asked to attend extra lessons. Because she was not the only one, I was not unduly concerned. However, although we were doing our reading and homework every afternoon, the feedback I was getting was that she was not trying hard enough, slow and careless, resulting in poor work. Nowhere in her books or on her progress reports could I find any positive remarks. My nightmare was about to begin, but sadly her nightmare had begun long ago, the pressure of school was already too much and her self esteem plummeted.

Sensing the teacher's frustration, I started applying more pressure at home, demanding more of her time, hoping I could stop the 'laziness' and end the conflict invading our peaceful home. I wanted her to blend in with the rest of the class. The day I ended up yelling at her to concentrate, I decided that this was not the role I wanted to play. I was her mother not her teacher, and I wanted the loving relationship back that we always had. Still no-one said there might be a learning problem. Research shows that these are the years that children discover their personal power and develop skills in managing themselves. Her inadequacies were already deeply rooted, her need for acceptance and praise was not forthcoming, resulting in attention seeking behaviour. The system let us down, and I am sure, that if the remarks and praise in the classroom had been more positive, and the problem timeously and correctly identified, she would have been motivated to improve and her self image would not have suffered.

Only in August of her Grade Two year, I was advised to send her to the T.E.D. Educational Centre for testing. I was told that the tests done showed that scholastically she had scored above average intelligence, but her frustration levels were low, she was restless, fidgety, her handwriting untidy and in her work, aggression and depression was evident. She was also in need of love and acceptance. Sadly it all pointed in our direction. The questions we, as parents were asked were hard hitting and direct. Did we have marital problems, what were our qualifications and had our daughter every been traumatised? We were also advised to consult a Neurologist, a Paediatrician, have an optometric and auditory evaluation. Intensive remedial help and Ritalin were also suggested. The role of teachers were never really questioned, their failure to recognise that her inability to cope, could be related to a learning problem. Negative comments like being told continually she was lazy and not trying hard enough, only belittling her in front of her peers and broke her spirit.

But the guilt was ours. Where did we, as parents, go wrong and where did I go wrong as a mother? We had a happy home, we were both qualified people, financially secure and emotionally stable. When she was born, I had made the decision to resign from my permanent lecturing post, to be a full time mom. I was privileged to be a twenty four hour safety net for her and her brother born four years later. I never smoked and seldom drank alcohol. Our wanted baby was born naturally, full term, with big blue eyes, dark hair and olive skin. My loving husband was always there for us, his quiet support was comforting and steadfast.

The Headmaster called her his Porsche with a flat tyre and recommended she join the school's Bridging Class for a few months. Still the decisions taken were not in her best interests, the small class environment of the Bridging Class did not provide the normality and security she needed. Her friends from nursery school days had moved up and once again she had been left behind. The message that she was different, was only being reinforced. The children in the Bridging Class just wanted to be accepted by their peers and I was sad and angry to see this lack of insight by various educators. My heart broke at the annual school gala, when I saw the small class seated to one side, quietly watching the festivities. While everyone was going to birthday parties, she never received an invitation, and as insignificant as it is to us, to any nine year old, it must have been devastating. Not only did her self esteem plummet even more, her learning problem was not addressed,

due to disruptions in the class, caused by the resignation of two teachers and behavioural problems of certain children. Her first progress report said due to the disruptions, they had been unable to evaluate her progress. Her coping mechanisms intensified and once again I had an unhappy, angry and tearful child.

I approached Bellavista School and she was assessed at SEEK. Unlike previous confidential assessment, I was included and I was given the first clear picture, into my daughter's problem. Two afternoons a week they worked on her inability to perceive words in space and to break words up into their component syllables and sounds, skills fundamental to reading and writing. The obvious praise she received, showed in her eagerness to attend lessons.

The following year an opening became available and she moved to Bellavista School. The two years had taken their toll and as a mother I still had a long road to travel. Her tears were still there, but slowly her self confidence improved. I would always support her and compliment her on her strengths and intelligence and reassure her that she could solve any problem. To me she was just a normal nine year old, who played first team netball and loved to dance and sing. I no longer kept quiet when other people discussed their children's progress, because I was extremely proud of her. All the mothers and fathers who have walked this path will know that only love, acceptance and 'hundreds of hugs and kisses' will solve the problem. That and the correct remedial help. It is just sad that some authorities do not give us better direction. We are vulnerable as parents and our children look to us for direction.

I know my story touched many people. Mothers approached me with tears in their eyes and parents who were at a loss as to which direction to follow, thanked me when they realised they were not alone. Everyone had a variation to my story, but our personal anguish was the same. Looking back, I remember that at the time, I just needed to write, to put down my own thoughts so that one day I could share them with my daughter. I was no author, just a mother lost in the system.

The years spent at Bellavista School moulded and shaped our daughter into the person she is today. Positive teachers, together with remedial and speech therapists, enabled her to give of her best, resulting in good results and beautifully presented work. She became enthusiastic, participating eagerly in all school activities. Bellavista School has given her direction and that is all she needed. Her testimonial described her as a very organised and a highly motivated young lady, a mature and reliable student with a pleasant sense of fun. This was a far cry from the weepy, unhappy girl who arrived in Grade Four. At the final assembly in Grade Seven, we, as parents, were so proud of her as we watched her do her Valedictory Speech. But more important was that she did so with so much confidence, maturity and ease.

That was some years ago and our daughter is now busy with mainstream where she continues to put a great deal of effort into her work. The adjustment has been easy and she is doing very well with her marks achieved on her mid semester report, showing nine out of the eleven subject percentages above class average. The road ahead will never be easy but the confidence and enthusiasm instilled in her, will guide her throughout her life.

Thank you to all the staff at Bellavista School, together we made it!

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