



BELLAVISTA

NEWSLETTER

HUMILITY - HUMANITY - HUMOUR

21 February 2022

Dear parents

Safe Harbours – in our lives and at our school

Our children are reeling. Period. And we are not alone. A quick scroll through any platform related to education and child raising will illuminate the enormity of the challenge. We must take a generation of children through

traumatic impact of the pandemic; particularly the loss – loss of life, loss of the normality in a given developmental stage, loss of socialisation and, for many, an arguably irredeemable loss of educational opportunity. As we emerge from two years of abnormal living, it would be a travesty not to transition our children and ourselves with intention, just as we did going into the first lockdown. Our actions need to be as deliberate as that.



Schools are a microcosm of the world. The world is disordered, uncertain, harsh and ravaged by urgency right now. It is on us as adults to create homes and places of learning that are ordered, predictable and grace-filled.

We all need psych-emotional help if we are honest. Epidemiologists and virologists have had their heyday. In this particular pandemic (there will be more) the baton of crisis seems quite firmly handed on to the psychology field. Doctors and therapists, mainstream medical and holistic, are booked to the hilt. They are the new frontline workers and they can't treat us all.

As a community, it may be useful to return to our primary needs, starting with us, the adults. We need the oxygen first so we can be of any use to our children. These basics of self-care include having confidants, sanctuaries and routine practices.



A *confidant* – someone to talk to and be vulnerable with; someone you have trust in to keep your matters private. This may be a faith leader, a friend, a spouse or a life partner. For some, it is their General Practitioner. You may see many people, but when did you last spend time and share your present reality with a confidant? Trauma, and the last two years have been traumatic for every

person, often uncovers deeper wounds and memories. Where have you expressed these emotions safely? Who do you invite to sit with you in the pain or celebrate the wins? You have to seek and select this confidant for yourself. It is only by invitation that you bring the person in.

A *sanctuary* – a physical area where you feel peace and draw breath or a zone where you find stillness and quiet. For many, this was a place of worship or prayer, a beautiful park or recreational area, a beach walk or a mountain view. It was a nook in a coffee shop or a patio at home, a bedroom or a canopy of large tree. It may have been a gym or a yoga studio. You may have been prohibited access to your sanctuary in the past two years. Either you couldn't get there, it was literally 'banished' or it was invaded by relentless notifications and video conference calls. Your next step is to re-establish a sanctuary in your life.

Routine practices – the world lost all sense of time in the past two years. Urgent overrode important in terms of priorities and deadlines. Days became months and minutes became seconds. Our schedules, habits, patterns of movement and daily rituals were not thrown into chaos once, there were lashed even within a day. Sleep became a time to work. Dinner became 'fast food' and, apart from devotees of YouTube's fitness sensations, movement and exercise gave way to stasis. Weekdays and weekends looked the same. The rhythm went punk, frenetic and edgy. Your challenge is to return to routine behaviours that bring you order. Each family and each individual, each school and each business must reset their practices. Perhaps it's a quiet meditation or prayers as the cool morning breeze gently lifts the day. Maybe it's the friend you meet for coffee weekly. Perhaps it's your weekly participation in your faith community. It might be 'date night' or bedtime stories, a walk with the dog or the purchase of a monthly good read. Only you know the routine practices that regulate you. Put them in.

To recover yourself, set about with intention.
Take the next steps.
It will get better.

What are we doing about the reset at school? All of the above, and more. It is important to share our approaches with you.

Confidants

At school, we have set up multiple points of contact with caring adults who can direct a child to their appropriate confidant. In addition to the Educators, Occupational Therapists and Speech-Language Therapists, who are all equipped to be key adults, we have two school-based psychologists, one psychologist intern, a social worker and a drama therapist. These professionals are running social groups, 'ALERT' programmes, short

term individual therapy and Bellavista originated programmes we call 'Bounce Back' and 'S.T.A.R.T.' Shortly, Brody and Shelby our much-loved therapy dogs and their handlers will visit us onsite regularly, to get alongside children who are struggling. EAGALA (equine based emotional intervention) resumes. Our IE practitioners are addressing the identification of emotions and empathy through the curriculum.



Our work is to contain the children, hear them and communicate with you so you can close the 'wrap around' from home. Individual children may need external therapy held off campus with your greater involvement, and we will make that referral to you. Ultimately, you are the key adult in your child's life. To help you, we invite you to our www.bellavista.org.za/bellavista-share platform, where you can access knowledge and information that may assist. We host professionals like Lorien Phillips (ADHD), Lesley Rosenthal (ASD) and Prof Venter, to assist you with specific support.

Sanctuary

School can and should be a safe space. When we are all on the same page, it is. On site, we are opening up the fuller campus, reintroducing the children to the venues and play spaces. It is taking them time. Consider that some children have only known two years of school under tight movement restrictions. We turn up each day consistent and welcoming, focusing on order. We are steadily revisiting each aspect of our Code of Expected Behaviour and enforcing it, starting with the basics: appearance, punctuality, work ethic and language. In my previous newsletter, I called for an *assumption of good intent*. If your child is uncomfortable with the tighter accountability for his/her actions, *assume good intent* and help your child to meet these very basic expectations.

Note: At many points where a child has felt or been unsafe in the last two weeks, it has not been at school but because of activities on social media and the internet. In your child's hands you place a device that brings connection, allows creativity and affords access to the world of music, art and science. ITC is a modern-day marvel. It is also a fast car, a ticking timebomb and a deadly weapon. If YOU, the parent, don't train, monitor and restrict your child's 'license', we can't help you nor prevent the trouble they expose themselves to. It is primary school. Take the internet access away or monitor it *continuously*. See www.bark.us or www.klikd.co.za. At school, we actively coach the children and deploy high end firewalls on our network. We simply are not present when you give them access at home.

Routine practices

School opens at a set time. The timetable is held. Break is break and sport is sport. We are reintroducing activities like line up, music instruction, assemblies and special days

as the children demonstrate their tolerance and stamina. Homework is not negotiable and neither is a full day's participation, including our extramural programme. On Tuesdays we collect non-perishable foods for KweZwe. The mornings are 'drop and go'. Children carry their own bags. On Fridays we have a sweetie tuck raffle and treat. Grade Sevens have duties and responsibilities as monitors. Children have the same in class. Greetings are expected and so too are respectful patterns of movement about the school. Masks remain non-negotiable except to eat and when out to play.

It is in this area that we have enormous opportunity together. Keep it simple:

- wake up > ablute > dress > breakfast > teeth > car > arrive punctually
- fetch > unpack bags > lunch > homework > play > bath > supper > bed

Bedtime is the same Monday to Friday. Family time is the priority. A play date a week is enough. Let school get back to full pace and stamina before you add a single extramural. In the last two years, we saw much improved endurance, good sleep patterns, and better attention in the day. Let's not regress by offering back-to-back scheduling each day.

We will have some white waters in our rapids of 2022, but we are on the dinghy together.

If depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress are your reality, persist in trying to see a professional and let a friend know you are trying. If you need a hotline to get through a moment, do call Lifeline –open 24 hours a day: 0860 322 322.

Nuts and bolts

Twosday!

This year we celebrate the rare palindrome date- February 22, 2022 or 2/22/22. And what's more, it falls on a Tuesday! This rare calendar event definitely calls for celebration- 22 Twosday!. Grade R to 3 will be dressing up in tutus, ties or mismatched takkies to mark this occasion and participate in fun activities during the school day.

Grade Seven Camp

Grade Seven children and teachers left for camp at 'The Container House' on the Vaal today. We wish them an exciting time.

A note from the PA

- Our seconds shop is now housed across the road at the Rose House. Fehmida Johnson (076 736 6111) and Julie-Ann McIntock (083 777 6677) are available to assist. The shop will be open every Tuesday 7h45 – 9h00, or by appointment. Donations of uniforms can be dropped off with Trevor or directly at the shop when you visit. All proceeds are donated to KweZwe.



- Class Representatives will reach out to each grade to set up a parent get together this term.
- Let's up the KweZwe game! Now receiving vegetables and non-perishable items each Tuesday.

The Bellavista Book Club

- All Bellavista parents are invited to join the Bellavista Parents' Book Club.
- This is an informal gathering where we discuss a pre-selected book and other parenting issues.
- The club meets every six weeks at Rose House, on a Tuesday morning between 8:00 and 9:00. The next meeting will be on Tuesday 15 March.
- Please contact Tammy Copeland (082 771 9384) if you would like to attend and for more information.

Midterm

School closes early on Thursday 24th February for the midterm break:

12h00 – Gr R-3

12h15 – Gr 4 – 6

Grade Seven parents will be advised the time of the bus arrival back at school after camp.

Bellavista S.H.A.R.E. events ahead



WEBINAR

Professor
André Venter

**ADHD
NEW MEDICATIONS**

Developmental Paediatrician

02 March | 07:30pm | 1 CPD Point

R150

bellavista.org.za/Bellavista-share

You will see attached to this email a “How To” booking guide for registering on the S.H.A.R.E. site.



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MyVillage
MyPlanet

BELLAVISTA

SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL
Make every swipe count!
www.myschool.co.za

Help Bellavista School to raise funds by signing up for a MySchoolMyVillageMyPlanet card. Visit www.myschool.co.za/download the MySchool app or call 0860100445 to get your card today.

You will find an icon on the Bellavista School app which allows parents and staff to update your beneficiary to Bellavista School, should you already have a Myschool card. Should you not have one, you can apply for a new one on the school app or else on the MySchool Website.

Enjoy the week!
Alison M Scott (Mrs)
Executive Principal

Advertisements and Notices:

THE SPORTS ACADEMY
PROFESSIONAL COACHING FOR CHILDREN

JP-076 272 6615
✉ jpjoubert9@hotmail.com
Philippians 4:13
"You can do all things through Christ"

"Champions are made when no one is watching."

- Private & Professional Coaching for boys and girls
- Hockey, Soccer, Athletics, Rugby, and Fitness Coaching Monday - Saturday
- Individual and group lessons
- Based at Jan Celliers Preparatory in Parkview
- Please contact me for further details JP for further details on 0762726615
