

15 January 2020

Dear Parents, Care-givers, Guardians, Teachers and Pupils,

Welcome back!

I hope you and your family had a wonderful December holiday and that you are relaxed, recharged and ready to start a new school year. I am delighted to become part of this amazing learning community of Oakhill School and the charming town of Knysna - My ex-colleagues in Johannesburg are beyond jealous! I would like to extend my gratitude to the school and extended community for the very warm and hearty welcome that my family and I have already received. It certainly attests to the close-knit family spirit and belongingness that the Oakhill staff, at a professional development opportunity on values that I attended last week Friday, highlighted as intrinsic to the ethos of the school. I welcome and value the positive energy and I look forward to working with all of you in 2020 and beyond (it has such a nice ring to it!).

All signs point to another incredible and productive school year especially after the release of the outstanding achievements of the matric group of 2019 in the beginning of January - I was already being congratulated before even starting at the school! Please follow this link outlining the highlights: [2019 Matric Results](#). Special mention must be made of Hanro Hay and Gabriela Kilzer who achieved an IEB Commendable Achievement recognition certificate acknowledging their impressive aggregates, as well as 5 candidates who ranked in the top 1% of candidates nationally in their respective subject areas: Afrikaans (Hanro Hay and Famke Beukes), Life Sciences (Hanro Hay and Jessica van Strijp), Physical Sciences (Hanro Hay), Geography (Daniel van Zyl) and Visual Arts (Angelina Faria).

We are very grateful for the dedicated staff, parents, guardians, care-givers and the community for their tireless efforts supporting and mentoring the matrics to achieve their personal best. It's not just the "A"s that should be celebrated but also the remarkable learning gains achieved by each matric individually, as well as their life skills learnt whilst at Oakhill, which will certainly set them up for success in the next stage of their life journey.

New beginnings

Change is inevitable; however, it can be quite unsettling for a school community especially with the start of a new member of the leadership team. With this in mind, I would like to provide a few insights into my professional background. I hold a Master's degree in music education, a Bachelor of Technology degree in education; and a National Diploma in human resource management as well as music. My educational management experience is extensive and diverse gained from working as a Deputy Principal at Sacred Heart College in Johannesburg (frequently mentioned as one of the most innovative and progressive schools in South Africa) for four and a half years managing and coordinating the academic, curriculum innovation and discipline portfolios of the school as well as establishing a very successful music programme. Before that I was at St Mary's School for Girls in



Waverley, Johannesburg as a teacher and the Head of Department of cultural arts for 10 years. Prior to that, I worked internationally as a teacher and performer in the Middle East and Europe for five and a half years. As can be seen by my experience and educational qualifications, I'm a creative and innovative thinker that thrives on challenge and providing strong support for students and staff to achieve their highest individual and collective potential. It is important to me to forge strong relationships amongst everyone in the school as well as the wider community – all in a spirit of teamwork, mutual respect and even a bit of fun. I look forward to getting to know you all and sharing my experience and expertise in further enhancing the outstanding offerings already on offer at Oakhill. For a little fun background, as to what I enjoy or not enjoy, please ask your children about my introductory presentation “*10 things you need to know about Mr Purchase*” at the beginning of term assembly.

Welcomes

We are delighted to welcome Elmarie Coetzer, our new Mathematics teacher to the College. Elmarie brings a solid skill set and we look forward to her contribution to the Mathematics department; her kind and gentle nature will certainly be an asset as a Grade 8 Mentor.

We also welcome all our new Grade 8s to the College as they start their journey with us. I had the privilege of meeting them over the weekend on camp and they are decidedly a lively and enthusiastic bunch of young people who will certainly bring their unique style to the College. There are also a few new students starting with us in higher grades and we wish them well and hope that they adjust quickly to life at Oakhill – ask as many questions as you want! I will certainly be doing so. Charlene Chan and Emily Lumley join us from Gordonstoun School, Scotland on exchange and wish them a wonderful stay with us and hope that they embrace every opportunity to experience the special school that Oakhill is, as well as the beauty of the Garden Route and all it has to offer.

Thank you to all who were busy preparing the school over the last few days to look in tiptop shape, as well as the academic staff that were busy with professional development, meetings and class and lesson preparation for the start of the academic year.

Warm regards,

Wayne Purchase