



Michael Mount **Waldorf** School

Nurturing conscious, creative, independent thinkers

11 May 2020

Dear Michael Mount community,

Thank you, dear parents, for your support and engagement at this unprecedented time. We are so appreciative of our dedicated teachers who have discovered that the delivery of good quality online teaching requires substantially more behind-the-scenes preparation. And we recognise our students, from the youngest to the matrics, for their resiliency and self-discipline in embracing this new way of learning. Thanks to our administrative team whose work, often unseen, provides essential support to our teachers, parents and students. And to Rory and Henry who are caring for the school grounds and preparing for our return.

Feedback

Feedback on the distance learning experience for your children - and yourselves – is much appreciated. Many of you have expressed gratitude for a healthy work rhythm creatively and consistently delivered by our teachers. There have been hiccups and we welcome the feedback when that happens. We remain committed to delivering Waldorf education as best we can and will continue to learn and improve our offering.

Reopening of schools

School re-opening dates are still to be confirmed by the National Coronavirus Command Council and Cabinet. The re-opening date (currently mooted as 1 June 2020) is not official until such time as we receive written confirmation. Inconsistent communication about the opening of schools continues to pervade the media but Michael Mount will take no action unless it is explicitly sanctioned.

NAISA continues to liaise closely with the Department of Basic Education and, in line with the recommendation for independent schools, the Federation of Waldorf Schools is looking into a phased approach for returning to school.

It is clear the matrics will be the first to return and we will move forward with great caution following all the required protocols.

Preparation at Michael Mount for reopening

Deep cleaning of the school commences today (Monday, 11 May 2020). We have received stock of all the hygiene and safety materials stipulated in the Standard Operating Procedures for Schools document prescribed by the Department of Basic Education, Department of Health and the Labour Department. Classrooms and school grounds will be prepared according to social distancing requirements.

The Waldorf advantage

We are ever mindful of the challenges distance learning places on you as parents. If your child can't complete every task or if you, as parents, have work commitments, then school must take a back seat for a while. The advantage of the Waldorf education approach is that, by staying with the teachers for several years, the teachers get to know your child very well and are well placed to ensure that adequate curriculum recovery is achieved.



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Looking forward

- Thank you to those parents who continue to meet their financial commitments to the school as this enables our teachers to focus on delivering Waldorf education, as well as ensuring the future of Michael Mount.
- We are closely watching the economic impact of this pandemic on our school community. For families that are experiencing unanticipated financial challenges, please contact our Bursar, Mr Hamish Brand, hbrand@michaelmount.co.za, to discuss ways to manage school fee payments.
- The Council of Management has approved a reduction of fees in the Early Childhood phase of the school as online, distance learning is not appropriate for the young child. Parents with young children in Baby Care, Play Group and Nursery School will be advised separately of approved fee reductions.
- Instant communication allows us to slip into texting or phoning at any time, however, we all need time away from work to recharge. Please remember that school hours are 7.50am – 3.30pm.
- Teachers are unavailable for calls at the following times due to faculty meetings:
 - Monday @ 2.00pm – Early Childhood teachers;
 - Tuesday @ 2.00pm – Primary School Class 5 – 7;
 - Wednesday @ 1.00pm – Primary School Class 1 – 4;
 - Wednesday @ 3.00pm – High School;
 - Thursday @ 2.30pm – College of Teachers.

Thank you once again for your patience, adaptability and positive attitude; it has been inspiring to see how we are woven together in mutual support, respect and kindness, despite the physical distancing and the ongoing uncertainties that face us.

Yours sincerely

J W Bester

Administrator