Michael Mount Waldorf School
Nurturing conscious, creative, independent thinkers

9 April 2020

Dear Michael Mount Community

We hope you and your families are in good health and good spirits. It's day 14 of our national lockdown. Officially there are seven more days to go. However, nothing is certain, and the school is preparing for the possibility that the lockdown may be extended beyond the 16 April.

In the meantime, as teachers, we have been communicating with each other to ensure the continuation of our children's Waldorf education. We have met nationally as the Federation of Waldorf Schools in SA and locally as Michael Mount's College of Teachers and we are all of one mind to support you and your children by keeping in touch and delivering distance learning.

As our school's vision states, we strive to nurture conscious, creative, independent thinkers, providing an academic education that is inseparable from a sense of purpose and community. In this spirit, we will continue to navigate this situation together.

Working on the assumption that the lockdown will continue beyond next week, we are putting the following plans in place:

- We understand that every family will have different capacities and needs during this time. And, in preparation for **term 2 starting on Monday, 20 April**, we will be sending out a survey to assess each family's online capacities.
- Be assured that Michael Mount teachers continue to work remotely with as much enthusiasm and commitment as they show your children in the classroom.
- Please remember that your child's teacher/guardian is always the first and best point of contact for any questions or concerns you might have.
- The teachers are busy creating age appropriate possibilities for their classes from 20 April. See below for an outline, in broad strokes, for each section of the school. This, we hope, will be helpful in providing an overview of the distance learning relationship should school not re-open.

Office hours Teachers are committed to providing support for all students and will continue to communicate regularly and are available for conversations as needed. From 20 April office hours are Monday to Friday, 8.00am – 3.30pm via email and texts. Please bear in mind that teachers may be teaching and will respond as soon as they are able.

Early Childhood Faculty - Play Group and Nursery School

The Early Childhood faculty teachers would like to assure you that they are available and committed to supporting you and your child as best they can during these uncertain times. The teachers will be communicating with you via email and WhatsApp to share information and resources. They will not provide online or recorded material.

Class 1 – 4

It is important to maintain a connection with the children, as well as provide them with stimulation and meaningful tasks. Where possible teachers will use online platforms to teach the children.

The focus will be on connection, consolidation and revision of work. Each teacher will contact the parents in their classes to outline their weekly programme, tailored according to available resources.

Please bear in mind that we are not an online schooling system, and that this option is to maintain contact with our children. It is not an ideal situation for children to see their teachers online, and we do not want little children staring at screens for too long. We are not expecting parents to home-school their children, only to assist in small ways.

Class 5 - 7

It is important for the teachers to maintain a strong connection and learning rhythm with their classes. In maintaining this rhythm children should engage as much as possible in the work content they receive.

The way the work is sent out will vary from teacher to teacher depending on the technology in their homes. All work that the children receive will be co-ordinated through the class teacher.

All teachers will be available during office hours to assist children and parents with advice or help in terms of the schoolwork sent out, this includes subject teachers. More specific details to follow.

Class 8, 9 & 10

In these challenging times every effort will be made to work with the children in a productive and supportive manner.

Class 8's will be assigned an email address.

All students from Class 8, 9 and 10 must join the webinar (link provided) https://www.mintgroup.net/.blog/events/stay-in-school-with-microsoft-teams on **Thursday, 16 April at 10am**, to find out more about how MS Teams works.

Main lesson work will be uploaded onto MS Teams for these classes. The teachers will be available to assist the students with any work they are struggling with. Class teachers and guardians will also be able to assist where needed. Main lesson work and subject lessons will continue with content provided by the teachers. Assignments and creative work will be sent for the children to do. Teachers will ask students to submit work for assessment and feedback will be given.

Class 11 & 12

Class 11 & 12 students will follow the timetable for term 2 for all academic subjects. The timetable will be sent to all students and parents.

Using MS Teams teachers will either teach online, or post worksheets / projects / assignments/ give students links of videos to watch etc. Teachers will ask students to submit work for assessment and feedback will be given. If work is not submitted by the due date the guardians will be informed and they will contact the parents. Main lessons may be taught online, experiments demonstrated etc and students will be given tasks / research to conduct.

- Class 11 students must continue with the Theoretical components of their projects.
- Class 12 students must continue working with their mentors regarding their One Research Task projects.

MS Teams – any password / connectivity issues to be communicated with Mrs Trish Godlonton – pgodlonton@michaelmount.co.za. Class 11 - 12 students must participate in a webinar on MS Teams on **Thursday 16 April 10-11 am** on the following link: https://www.mintgroup.net/.blog/events/stay-in-school-with-microsoft-teams

Administration

Office staff are also working remotely during this time and are available to support and answer questions where required. Office hours are 8.00am to 3.30pm, Monday to Friday from Tuesday, 14 April.

Useful email addresses:

Administrator
William Bester wbester@michaelmount.co.za

Deputy Administrator
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In summary

The school continues to navigate through this new situation and is in regular contact with the Dept of Education, ISASA, NAISA and other relevant statutory bodies to ensure we are up to date and informed. Any changes will be communicated as we become aware of them.

Thank you for your continued support during this time. We are so appreciative of your efforts as partners in providing ongoing education for our students. We understand these are challenging times and, should you require assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Let's remember we are in this unique and unprecedented time together. May we all be blessed with peace, hope and love throughout Easter and Pesach and beyond.

Regards

William Bester
Administrator