



# LORETO CONVENT SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Learning and Leading in Love and Justice



11 June 2021

Volume 23 Issue 06

Dear Parents,

The end of term is drawing near at an incredibly fast pace, and I think I speak for everyone when I say that we are all ready for this upcoming break. Covid fatigue is a reality in every household, and there are very few of us in the Loreto community that have not been affected by the virus in some way or another. This fatigue, both physical and mental, combined with escalating positive cases at the school, has meant that staff and learners have had to dig very deep this week to find the courage and strength to push through and aim to end this term on a hopeful, successful note. We continue to pray for everyone in our school community - for their physical protection and safety, for a refreshing sense of hope to fill our lives and for our Heavenly Father to give us guidance and to help us to make wise decisions and lead our school forward in these turbulent times.

We have seen a rise in Covid cases at school this week, which is a reflection of what is also occurring in our wider community. We are most certainly in the midst of this third wave of Covid, and schools across the city have been doubling their efforts to keep teaching and learning moving forward, despite the challenges that this wave is presenting. Unfortunately, we are also seeing a rise in irresponsible behaviour. We would like to urge parents in the strongest terms possible, to please practise safe protocols and encourage their children to do the same. Our learners do not seem to grasp the seriousness of the current situation, and unfortunately, we have seen many parents who also do not seem to practise responsible behaviour. Inasmuch as the school is doing everything in their power to stop the spread of the virus, we cannot be successful if we are doing this in isolation. We need everybody's help. If you are waiting for test results, please do not send your child to school. If your child is feeling unwell, please have them tested. Communicate immediately with the school - we need to have as much information at hand in order to adapt our own protocols and identify possible risks. Now is the time to take extra precautions - avoid exposing your child to possible infection by keeping them at home, avoiding gatherings and shopping malls. Discipline begins at home, and sadly we have seen a gradual decline in learner discipline, which is having a direct impact on our ability to keep learners safe at school.

The road ahead is uncertain, and we uphold our commitment to making sure that the school community will do everything we can to navigate these unprecedented times. We know that some of our learners are stressed and anxious, we realise that there are some household circumstances that are under severe pressure and we realise that our staff are giving more of themselves than ever before. We need to stand strong as a school community now more than ever before, so that we can forge ahead, safely.

*Stuber*

From the Principal's Office

[pa@loreto.co.za](http://pa@loreto.co.za)

[www.loreto.co.za](http://www.loreto.co.za)

[pa@loreto.co.za](mailto:pa@loreto.co.za)

012 326 6342

# Independent Examination Board (IEB)



and the

## Department of Education NSC Examinations



**basic education**

Department:  
Basic Education  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**



As part of our recent survey, we asked parents whether they would be interested in pursuing the IEB curriculum and examinations going forward, instead of continuing with the Department of Education's NSC examinations and curriculum that is currently utilised at the school. Although we had a very limited response to our survey, over 80% of parents that did give feedback, indicated that they would be interested in possibly making the change to IEB. The Board has made the decision to initiate the process of transitioning to IEB. We have compiled this short document in order to give you a better idea of the details and logistics involved in moving to IEB, as well as indicating possible reasons why the School will be doing so.

The IEB is a Section 21 company that has been approved as a public benefit organisation in terms of the Income Tax Act. Therefore, it has been registered by the Department of Social Development as a non-profit organisation. Every product and service rendered by the IEB is self-sufficient and no subsidy is received by government. Its directors serve the organisation without remuneration. The IEB offers external assessment in accordance with legislation and Umalusi directives, for the schools registered with it. The key examination in schooling is the National Senior Certificate (NSC) written at the end of Grade 12. By law the IEB is only able to offer assessment for the NSC to independent schools.

The IEB also provides additional assessments that complement teaching and learning in schools at other levels. These include:

- International Benchmark Tests, in partnership with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) in Language (Grades 3 to 10), Mathematics (Grades 3 to 10), Reasoning (Grades 3 to 10) and Science (Grades 3 to 8);
- Subject specific assessments at Grade 9;
- Assessment in Mathematics at Grade 11;
- Core Skills Tests at Grade 6

The IEB also offers Advanced Programme Mathematics and Advanced Programme English. These two courses have been benchmarked by UK NARIC as equivalent to A-level courses.

The IEB produces consistent, reliable results in the Grade 12 National Senior Certificate:

- Average pass rate is between 97% and 98%
- Pass with entry to degree study, between 78% and 80%

A study carried out at the University of Cape Town in 2008 noted that:

- 25% of first degree graduates at UCT in 2007 came from IEB schools
- On average over a 3-year period, the throughput rate of learners from IEB schools was 98%

The IEB seeks to advance quality teaching and learning in South Africa through an assessment process of integrity, innovation and international comparability. All schools registered with the IEB to write the National Senior Certificate have access to a range of professional development opportunities as well as a variety of assessments, designed to serve a range of purposes.

## REASONS FOR MAKING THE TRANSITION TO IEB

		<u>GDE</u>	<u>IEB</u>
1	Standard of Promotion Requirements and Examinations	There is a regular drop in the standards being maintained as well as the promotion requirements from learners across subjects. Quality controls are inconsistent.	The standard of examination requirements, as well as promotion requirements remains consistent and quality controls are consistent.
2	Curriculum Requirements and Assessment	Regular changes and cuts in the curriculum which brings about gaps when teaching topics in higher grades and results in inconsistent coverage of skills and required knowledge by learners.	Curriculum remains consistent with no repeated changes and cuts. This promotes stability and a progressive and consistent coverage of skills and knowledge, thereby not disadvantaging learners.
		Knowledge must be memorised as is and must be recalled in parrot fashion without any deviation from the wording set out in accepted department textbooks (For example, Mind the Gap Study Guides).	Varied responses are acceptable, as long as these responses reflect understanding of the content and foundational knowledge of the content covered. Learners are encouraged to think beyond facts that can be merely memorised.
		"IEB high schools teach learners how to think, not what to think; how to frame the important questions, not only what the answers are; how to critically engage, not what to say. The teaching and facilitation at IEB schools is geared to encouraging learners to consider issues for themselves; to be analytical, reflective and resourceful in order to provide unrehearsed, substantiated responses that they themselves have developed. The teaching, learning and assessment in our schools addresses the 'why' and 'how' aspects of learning in addition to the 'what'." <i>IEB Website</i>	
3	Classes: Alternating / Platooning	Still alternating to accommodate different grades on different days and not all schools are able to offer online schooling.	Full-time learning is currently taking place for all learners (whether online or physically at school).
4	Forced Closure of Schools	If not on level 4 or 5, unions have great influence – private schools registered with department must close.	Unless on level 4 or 5, schools may remain open – unions have no influence on this.
5	Assessment Weightings and Adjustments	Assessment plans with the associated weightings are regularly changed or amended, forcing standards to drop even further and cause confusion in the classroom because teachers have to keep making adjustments to their assessment plans and teaching plans.	No regular adjustments are made, the assessment plan is more stable and teachers are able to cover curriculum content and assessment in a stable, knowledgeable fashion.
6	Common Assessments	Levels of the questions vary but higher level of questioning is discouraged – private schools have no authority to make changes, including the corrections of errors, which are usually present in the question papers and memos.	Teachers set their own assessments (there is a prerequisite on the percentage of the level questioned – more challenging) and are able to adequately assess content that has been covered. There are less errors and more checks before the final assessments are completed and marked.
		Schools are only allowed to test / examine topics that department demands must be taught.	Teachers are responsible for the whole curriculum and therefore plan accordingly for the year and test accordingly.
7	Database System and Administration of School Data	SA-SAMS – often has multiple errors (we often have to apologise for the discrepancy in marks from one term to the next – due to erroneous weightings which we cannot change) Schools are at the mercy of the developers and a system that does not work.	Own programme can be used – fixed weightings and correct setup that can be adjusted to the schools' requirements.

		System updates and patches are often late and holds up marks and reports as well as other administrative tasks.	Schools are able to manage their own software through third party suppliers, which have a much higher level of support and a superior product.
8	Facilitators	Department facilitators are often unaware of the requirement weightings set out for assessments vs the changes in SA-SAMS. Schools cannot deviate from the memoranda given by the Department for common assessment – although sometimes wrong, yet we have to accept as correct. Often various districts in the same city have differing requirements and reporting structures, and there is absolutely no uniformity or alignment to National requirements.	Schools are able to compile their own assessments, and memoranda cater for the various answers that can be given by learners. There is uniformity across the board in terms of requirements and reporting.
9	International Prospects	Not accepted internationally.	Accepted internationally.

The IEB provides schools that are registered with it the support and assistance they require to provide their learners with a credible, valid and reliable examination result. We have discussed the quality of IEB professional support for teachers and learners and the importance of an examination of quality on teaching and learning.

However, the IEB has as one of its values, commitment and service. Our administrative staff too is committed to ensuring that schools have all the information and answers they need to conduct a problem-free examination. They are trained to assist and resolve difficulties as best and as easily as possible within the confines of legislation; their professionalism and willingness to assist wherever possible has constantly earned them praise from IEB registered schools.

The IEB is a relatively small organisation and hence staff members can be contacted quite easily by telephone, fax or email. Some situations need swift attention and because of the size of the IEB most emergencies can be readily dealt with and answers speedily provided.

## EXAMINATION FEES

An examination fee per Grade 12 learner, is to be paid in the final year of study in order for the learners to write their exams. Currently this fee is approximately R9000 and will unfortunately have to be absorbed by our parents. It is very important to note that if this examination fee is not fully settled with the IEB, a learner will not be able to sit for her Matric Exams.

The details of this additional expense are being discussed and debated in Finance Committee and Board meetings, so that options can be presented to parents that are fair, equitable and sustainable by the school.

The School will be communicating with parents as we finalise the planning of this transition.

Kind regards,

Loreto Convent School Management

# GENERAL NEWS (HS AND PS)

## **SCHOOL CONTACTS:**

General Enquiries, Reception and **Absentees** – Mrs Mateka - [reception@loreto.co.za](mailto:reception@loreto.co.za)

Executive Principal– Mrs Truter – [principal@loreto.co.za](mailto:principal@loreto.co.za)

Executive Principal's Office – Mrs Stoman – [pa@loreto.co.za](mailto:pa@loreto.co.za)

Admissions – Ms Westra – [admissions@loreto.co.za](mailto:admissions@loreto.co.za)

**Finance and Finance Matters** – Mrs Swart – [finance@loreto.co.za](mailto:finance@loreto.co.za)

**Primary School** Deputy Principal – Ms Hill – [michelleh@loreto.co.za](mailto:michelleh@loreto.co.za)

**High School** Deputy Principal – Ms Alves (previously Mrs Pinto) – [mariaa@loreto.co.za](mailto:mariaa@loreto.co.za)

EMIS Officer – Mrs Swanepoel – [admin@loreto.co.za](mailto:admin@loreto.co.za)

Sports and Physical Education Queries – Mrs Haupt – [sherilynh@loreto.co.za](mailto:sherilynh@loreto.co.za)

**Uniform Shop** - Nompilo Bembe- 068 274 7795- [uniforms@loreto.co.za](mailto:uniforms@loreto.co.za)



(012) 326 6342

## Office Hours

Mon to Thu 07h00 to 15h00

Fridays 07h00 to 14h30

Admission Office and Card  
Payments to 13h00 daily

Our admin staff currently screen learners until approximately 08h00 every morning, so please be patient - they will attend to you as soon as they are able to. Also please note that our phone lines are extremely busy during the day - if possible, please send an email to the appropriate person instead, so that we can attend to your query as quickly as possible.

Website (for booklists, school fee info, bank details, calendar, newsletters and other information)

[www.loreto.co.za](http://www.loreto.co.za)



# PRIMARY SCHOOL

- 💡 Our **Winter Outreach program** is drawing to a close. If any parents or learners would still like to donate a blanket or squares knitted at home, please do so by **Monday 14 June**. As we are deep into winter, we would like to distribute these blankets to the needy community around the school as soon as possible.
- 💡 The final day to send in the **photo order form and money** (or do an EFT) is **Friday 18 June**. If you pay Gordon Harris directly, please send the proof of payment, together with the order form, to Ms Hill. Your child can bring these forms to school or you can email them to Ms Hill: **[michelleh@loreto.co.za](mailto:michelleh@loreto.co.za)**
- 💡 **Primary School extra lessons** end on **Thursday, 10 June**. This means that all the learners will finish school by 13h30.
- 💡 **Wednesday, 16 June is a public holiday** - Youth Day, and therefore the school will be closed.
- 💡 As from **Thursday, 17 June**, school finishes at **11h00 for all Primary School learners**. This is due to the Senior Primary girls starting with their control tests. Primary School learners may be picked up at the drive through facility in **Visagie Street** as from **11h00**, but there will be **supervised study** for all learners until **14h00**. Day care continues as normal until 17h25.
- 💡 As indicated above, our senior girls will start with their **test period on 17 June**, and finish on the last day of school, **Friday 25 June, at 11h00**. The children will mostly be writing two papers daily, and the first session begins **promptly at 7h45**. Please ensure that your daughter is **on time** for school to avoid any unnecessary stress during this period. It is also very important that your child enjoys a **good, nutritious breakfast** before writing, and also brings **lunch** with to school to eat during a short break and after the session if she is staying until 14h00, or for daycare. Please also ensure that your child has all the necessary **stationery**.

- 💡 Please take note that our winter holidays **do not coincide** with those of public schools. School closes on **Friday 25 June and reopens on Tuesday 13 July**.
- 💡 Term 2 reports will be emailed to parents in **Term 3**, once all schedules and marks have been signed off by the Department.

## UNIFORM SHOP



The uniform shop has new operating times and a new manager. *Welcome Nompilo!*



**Monday and Friday from 7h00-9h00**

**Wednesday 12h00-14h30**

For any appointments outside of these times, please contact Nompilo on 068 274 7795

Parents are also welcome to communicate via WhatsApp

We will be posting a full price list on the website for parents to access next week

# H, A, V, I, N, G, F, U, N, W, I, T, H, C, L, A, Y,





## **ACADEMIC**

1. **Grade 9 Maths:** As per the Department of Education's policy, no learner who does not achieve the **promotion mark of 40% in Mathematics** may be promoted to Grade 10. The school, however, will allow these learners to go into the next grade on condition that **Mathematical Literacy** is taken as a subject.
2. **Absence from school and school work:**
  - 2.1 if any learner is absent from school, the parent or guardian must **notify the school** on the day so that such learner is placed on the list to receive school work. School work will be posted either on Google Classroom or posted on WhatsApp through the learner's peers. (Notify the school by sending an email to **reception@loreto.co.za**)
  - 2.2 Please take note of the **Learner Attendance Policy** on the school's website. It is of importance to all learners and parents as the school will not take responsibility for work and assessments missed by learners **whose absence is not notified to the school.**
3. **Life Orientation (Physical Education):** It is important to note that **Life Orientation**, apart from the theory, also contains a **Physical Education section** which counts for 20% of the final mark. Often our learners find various excuses so as not partake in these activities (which range from sprinting to walking to indigenous games). Learners have been asked to **bring a letter** from home or a doctor's certificate with reasons as to why they cannot perform some or any of these activities. Learners without a letter and who refuse to do an activity will be awarded a zero.
4. **Google Classroom uninstalled:** It has come to the school's attention that some learners have uninstalled the **Google Classroom app**. Parents need to be aware that, although we are back at school with the full complement of learners, teachers do still make use of the app to post extra resources.
5. **Controlled Test Timetable:** Parents please take note that on **25 June session 1 has been swapped with session 2**. This means that **only** for that day (and due to the swop) the second session will start at 11h00. All learners have been notified of this.
6. **Term 2 reports** will be collated once we open in Term 3. We hope to be able to email them in the second week of term.

7. The school has decided to move from the Department of Education's examinations to the **Independent Examinations Board**. We have attached a notice regarding this transition. Please make sure that you do read it as it does influence you and your child's learning.

## **OUTREACH**

1. Knitted squares: although our blanket initiative ends on the 16 June, we kindly ask that learners continue **knitting squares**. These squares will be set aside for our next drive.

## **SAFEGUARDING OUR CHILDREN**

1. Cell phones: a kind reminder that **NO learner is allowed to bring smartphones** to school. If the child is caught on the premises with the phone, it will be confiscated for the year. Many parents have merely signed the Code of Conduct without reading the school rules. Please ensure that you do read them with your daughter. The rules can be found in the Code of Conduct and also on our website. We kindly ask that parents help us in this regard, as learners use the smartphone as a bullying mechanism.

Please take note of the updated School Rules. **Points 14.1 (hair) and 16 (cellular phones) have been updated**. All learners will receive an Annexure to attach to their Code of Conducts.

### **14.1 Hair**

14.1.1 *It should always be neat and tidy.*

14.1.2 *NO Mohawk styles are allowed.*

14.1.3 *Braids/dreads are allowed to be worn by girls, but should follow the natural contour of the head and be the same colour as the natural hair.*

14.1.4 *The hair should be kept tied back against the scalp (not loosely) away from the face. Braids/dreads should not be so thick that it prevents learners from tying their hair neatly and to the scalp. Hair that is just below the collar must be tied back.*

14.1.5 *Afros may be worn. However, it must be neat at all times and must be worn in such a way that it does not obscure the view of other learners in class.*

14.1.6 *Fade: learners may wear a fade. However, the length between the top and bottom hair may not be more than one cut size apart. NO shaven areas are acceptable. NO patterns (including a line) may be shaven into the hair irrespective of the length.*

14.1.7 *Hair may not be coloured.*

14.1.8 *Hair accessories should be white, black or navy blue.*

14.1.9 *Hair embellishments are limited to a few small, silver metal hairclips. NO beads of any colour or shape or size are allowed.*

### **16 Cellular Phone Rules**

- 16.1 *Smartphones are **not ALLOWED** at school! If a learner brings her smartphone to school, disciplinary action will occur. Smartphones that are in the possession of learners will be handed over to the principal or deputy principal and kept until the end of the year, or, if*

*the parent prefers, it is confiscated for a period of three (3) months only, but a fine of R500 must be paid on collection.*

- 16.2 *No Primary School learner may have a cell phone of any type at school. However, High School learners may have cell phones that allow calls and SMS' but have no internet access e.g.; Alcatel.*
- 16.3 *High School learners must lock away their cell phones in the learners' lockers or, if learners arrive after the early morning bell, it must be handed in at reception for safekeeping and can be collected at the end of the day. The school does not take responsibility for loss/theft of any cell phones. Cell phones that are in the possession of learners will be handed over to the principal or deputy principal and kept until the end of the year, or, if the parent prefers, it is confiscated for a period of three (3) months only but a fine of R500 must be paid on collection.*
- 16.4 *Due to COVID-19, the use of the locker area is prohibited to all learners. Learners are therefore responsible to keep their phones switched off and packed away for the duration of the day. The school does not take responsibility for loss/theft of any cell phones. If a cell phone rings during the course of the day, it will be handed over to the principal or deputy principal and kept until the end of the year, or, if the parent prefers, it is confiscated for a period of three (3) months only but a fine of R500 must be paid on collection.*

2. On 9 June we had the pleasant company of service dogs who jointly with their trainers set about sniffing the whole school for drugs. This is not to be seen as a punishment but rather a precaution. Our learners well-being and safety is always a priority.

## EVENTS

1. A kind reminder: All teachers have to attend **three compulsory sessions on Child Safeguarding**. Our first session was on 14 May, with the second one on 11 June. The third session will take place on **23 July, from 13h00**. Therefore, all learners will end school at **12h45** and we request that parents make arrangements so as to pick up their daughters on time.
2. On 7 June, the school celebrated its **birthday** (143 years) with a blessing. Both teachers and learners received a small token in celebration.
3. We wish all fathers a **blessed Father's Day on 20 June**. May your day be filled with the laughter of family and friends.

## UNIFORM

1. School tracksuits: In Winter, during extreme cold conditions, learners **may wear their school tracksuits**. Please ensure that white tekkies are worn with the tracksuit and that any other items of clothing (not school related) is hidden under the tracksuit. It is important to note that the school tracksuit **does NOT replace the Winter uniform** but is rather used to on extremely cold days and when writing exams for comfortability.

### TERM 3

1. On **12 July, from 9h00 – 12h00**, the **uniform shop** will be opened for any parent who wishes to purchase any item.
2. Term 2 ends on **25 June**. We wish every family a restful and peaceful holiday. We open for term 3 on **13 July**.

## OUR CHALLENGE FOR NELSON MANDELA DAY!

**HELP US THIS  
NELSON MANDELA  
DAY BY DONATING  
R67 TOWARDS  
OUR ORGANISATION.**

You can donate by using  
our banking details below or  
scanning the QR Code.

#### BANKING DETAILS

BANK: FNB

BRANCH CODE: 210835

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 6280 9016 703

REFERENCE: NELSON MANDELA DAY

*Help us make a  
difference in the  
lives of people  
with disabilities*

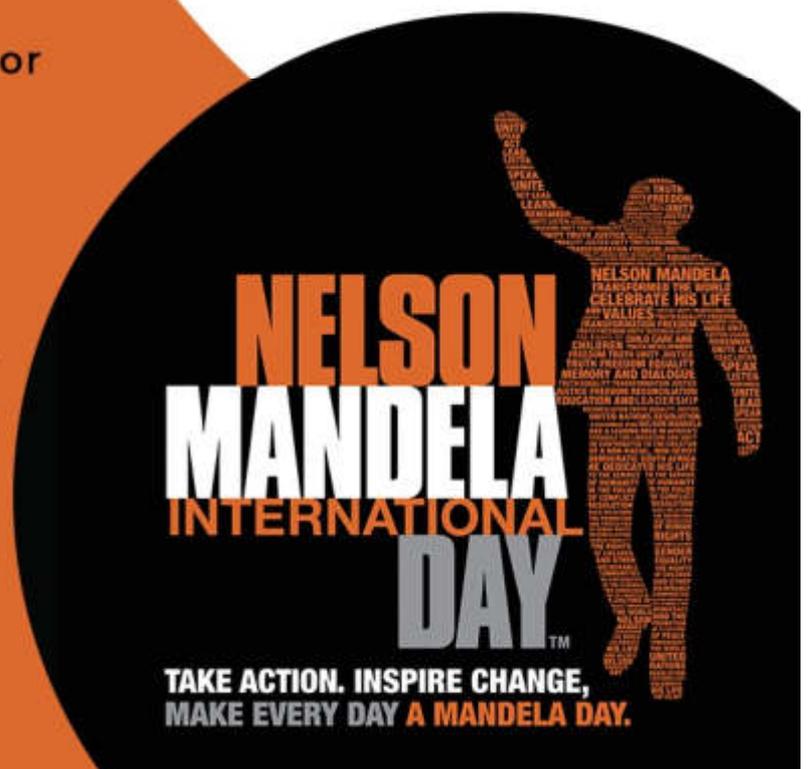


@kungwini   kungwini\_org

Please Email  
[Marketing@kwo.org.za](mailto:Marketing@kwo.org.za)  
or call **012 940 0221**  
for more information



SCAN ME TO DONATE



# FINANCE MATTERS

**Firstly**, we need to **thank** those parents who have faithfully been paying their school fees. In order for the School to stay operational, parents HAVE to pay their school fees on time. Loreto Convent School is not a State or no-fee paying school, and as such, we need to rely on the payment of school fees as the majority stream of income that must finance all expenses throughout the year.

**Statements** have been sent out to parents. If you are not receiving our bulk mails, please do let us know.

Please note that school fees are payable **UPFRONT**, by the **7<sup>th</sup> of every month**. This means that all fees, up to and including January/February 2021 fees are already due and payable in full. Overdue accounts will be followed up and handed over to our debt collection company for recovery. Please note that you will be liable for any **interest** on the account and collection and/or legal **fees**, should the account be handed over. **Overdue accounts will be charged an interest rate of 2% per month, as per our contract.** We are going to be very strict regarding the payment of fees in 2021.

We have a large number of payments that have been made into the school's bank account that do not have any references, or incorrect references. If you have made one of these payments, please do send your proof of payment to Mrs Swart at [finance@loreto.co.za](mailto:finance@loreto.co.za) so that she can allocate it.

We would also like to appeal to parents to **PLEASE** reference their payments correctly, as it is almost impossible to allocate correctly, or understand what is being paid for when the references are missing or incorrect. Examples of such references are "School Fees", "Loreto Fees" or "Cash Payment" – it does not indicate who is making the payment or what is being paid.

Reference payments as following please:



### LORETO CONVENT SCHOOL

P O Box 11381  
The Tramshed  
0126  
Tel: 0123266342  
Fax: 0123242780  
E-mail: [finance@loreto.co.za](mailto:finance@loreto.co.za)

Banking details: Standard Bank Main Account  
Bank: Standard Bank of S.A Ltd  
Branch code: 051001  
Account holder: Loreto Convent School  
Account number: 010387927  
Account type: Cheque

---

### ACCOUNT STATEMENT ON 14 JANUARY 2021

Account reference: **1033** (MNI002)

P O Box 13487  
The Tramshed  
Pretoria 0126  
Tel: 0845807241

Learner information:

[Redacted]



please pay promptly!

INVOICE

Please cut on the dotted line and send the top part back with your payment

Reference: Your account number at school i.e. 1110 \*\* **Take note that these references are only examples and must not be used.** Please contact the accounts department to get your account reference. The reference will also appear on your monthly statement in the place indicated by the red circle above.

The reference is your four-digit family code number, NOT the old family code or your surname or the child's name.

Please also do try to pay correct amounts, in this way, the system is able to allocate to the account automatically and mistakes are avoided.

## MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS - TEACHING AND LEARNING DURING A PANDEMIC

There is most certainly nothing normal about the times we are living in today. Expected daily stressors and challenges have been amplified beyond measure during this pandemic, and both adults and children are facing physical, mental and spiritual exhaustion at present. One only has to scan the daily news to see a rise in bullying, abuse and learner suicide. Covid is certainly playing a role in the escalation of these tragic events. We would like to encourage everyone to take some time to focus on mental health, as it is so often neglected. Parents, please be mindful of your child's current emotional and mental state. Often children cannot express the anxiety, fear and isolation that is taking over their lives.

While it's not always easy to recognize when children are stressed out, short-term behavioural changes — such as mood swings, acting out, changes in sleep patterns, or bedwetting — can be indications. Some children have physical effects, including stomach aches and headaches. Others have trouble concentrating or completing schoolwork. Still others become withdrawn or spend a lot of time alone.

Younger children may pick up new habits like thumb sucking, hair twirling, or nose picking; older children may begin to lie, bully, or defy authority. A child who is stressed also may overreact to minor problems, have nightmares, become clingy, or have drastic changes in academic performance.

How can you help children cope with stress? Proper rest and good nutrition can boost coping skills, as can good parenting. Make time for your kids each day. Whether they need to talk or just be in the same room with you, make yourself available. Don't try to make them talk, even if you know what they're worried about. Sometimes our children just feel better when you spend time with them on fun activities.

Even as children get older, quality time is important. It's really hard for some parents to come home after work, get down on the floor, and play with their children or just talk to our teenagers about their day — especially if they've had a stressful day themselves. But expressing interest shows your children that they're important to you.

Help your child cope with stress by talking about what may be causing it. Together, you can come up with a few solutions like spending more time talking with parents or teachers, developing an exercise regimen at home, talking to a therapist (or play therapy for younger children) or keeping a journal to express their feelings.

Remember that some level of stress is normal; let your child know that it's OK to feel angry, scared, lonely, or anxious and that other people also share those feelings. Reassurance is important, so remind them that you're confident that they can handle the situation.

When children can't or won't discuss their stressful issues, try talking about your own. This shows that you're willing to tackle tough topics and are available to talk with when they're ready. If a child shows symptoms that concern you and is unwilling to talk, consult a therapist or other mental health specialist. Sometimes, it is hard for children to express themselves - ask your young child to draw or paint a picture about how they are feeling or about what makes them happy and sad. Teenagers are often better at communicating by writing letters - write a letter to your child telling them about how much you love them, how proud you are of them and tell them that they can always write you a letter or note about how they feel or what is happening in their lives. When your child does open up to you, it is important to acknowledge their feelings, and not to judge or belittle them about their problems. Try words such as, "Thank you for your letter. I didn't know that you are feeling these feelings. I am sorry that you are going through this. How can I help you change this situation?" Avoid phrases such as "I don't do that. You are being so dramatic over nothing. That can't be possible. If you stop doing this or that, I won't react like that. Nobody else in this family feels like that."

Most parents have the skills to deal with their child's stress. The time to seek professional attention is when any change in behaviour persists, when stress is causing serious anxiety, or when the behaviour causes significant problems at school or at home.

The school has an in-house psychologist and a social worker. Parents are encouraged to make use of these services when the need arises. The South African Depression and Anxiety Group also offers a multitude of very useful information and assistance.

## Behind the mask of a teacher...

We arrive at school daily before the sun rises. We stand in the icy, winter weather screening & taking temperatures, ensuring our children's hands are sanitized before they enter the school grounds.

We head to icy, cold classrooms with doors & windows kept wide open to keep the virus at bay, our fingers so swollen and painful, we can barely bend them.

On really cold days it feels like we are sitting in a wind tunnel. We keep checking over & over again that everybody is maintaining social distance & wearing their masks properly all the while trying to keep up with the demands of teaching of an already heavy curriculum and trying to fill the gaps in knowledge left by last year's lockdown & rotational school attendance not to mention ensuring that the children in our class don't pick up on our anxiety...

A child drops a pencil...her friend reaches over to pick it up for her, stopping as she sees me shake my head remembering that she may not touch other people's belongings.

Another child falls over and hurts herself at play...I may not wipe away her tears or dust her off or give her a much needed hug.

Another child enters my classroom with tear filled eyes...she too has lost a loved one to Covid. My mommy heart wants to reach out to her & hug her because yes I too know this pain as I too have lost loved ones to Covid but I may not touch her & my heart aches...

I see their fear filled eyes when they notice a classmate is absent. "What is wrong with her Mam," they ask?" I am sure she is fine", I reassure them smiling at them from behind my mask and hoping my smile is reaching my eyes. I try to squash the anxiety filling me. I lift my eyes heavenward for a moment and say a silent prayer for this absent child and her loved ones and all the other children in my care...and I carry on teaching the day's lessons to take their minds away from fears that no child should have to bear. My anxious heart keeps thinking back to yesterday ...did I miss a symptom, did I do enough to keep her safe?

Each time I mark a book, or hand out notes, or help a child struggling with their work, I need to remember to sanitize my hands to keep myself, these children in my care & their families safe...

Why do we do this? This is our job, this is our passion, this is our calling and we carry on being the professionals we are. After all we are in the privileged position of holding the future in our hands...

Behind the mask though we are humans too with our own families and our own fears and yes we are also scared each and every day. We worry every day that we might carry the virus home to our families or worse our elderly parents.

So if you know a teacher thank her today. They are carrying a load much, much heavier than many realize...

## EMERGENCY LINES

**Dr Reddy's Help Line**  
0800 21 22 23

**Cipla 24hr Mental Health Helpline**  
0800 456 789

**Pharmadynamics Police & Trauma Line**  
0800 20 50 26

**Adcock Ingram Depression and Anxiety Helpline**  
0800 70 80 90

**ADHD Helpline**  
0800 55 44 33

**Department of Social Development Substance Abuse Line 24hr helpline**  
0800 12 13 14  
SMS 32312

**Suicide Crisis Line**  
0800 567 567

**SADAG Mental Health Line**  
011 234 4837

**Akeso Psychiatric Response Unit 24 Hour**  
0861 435 787

**Cipla Whatsapp Chat Line (9am-4pm, 7 days a week)**  
076 882 2775



**LIFE  
GETS  
BETTER  
TOGETHER**