



Principal's Weekly Update: 20th October 2025

ST CHARLES COLLEGE
S O U T H A F R I C A

Dear Parents, Guardians and Grandparents

Unlimited possibility

The fortunate part about being us is that St Charles College's future-potential never seems to run out. We have been working at reshuffling the pieces for next year in order to consolidate that which is excellent, and move forward in areas which are not fully developed. Hudson says, "Our endings, more than our beginnings, keep us committed to living as fully as we can, and despite change being good, we want to make sure that we learn the lessons from the endings before we are overtaken by new beginnings."

I should be in a position to communicate those changes later this week, but what I can report is that we have reached the 90% mark on the chapel-stained-glass installation and we have pressed the button to get that work started. We trust that the final funds will come in, and we will be able to celebrate the 150th with one final flourish, before the year closes.

Method in the madness

Almost every cricket team on Saturday found themselves in a bit of trouble within five overs. Almost without exception, they dug their way back to respectable positions and I realised why we train in the week – not just to win games but to prepare boys for how to face situations where the odds are stacked against them. Can there be any greater life lesson? Although I unintentionally missed the water polo games because I read the destination incorrectly, when I did arrive, I was taken aback by the maturity of the boys; every account was one of how good the matches had been and not about the scores which were not in our favour. If our coaching focuses on celebrating when the things we practice have worked out during matches, and the boys can speak that way too, that is quite an incredible accomplishment. I did make it to the basketball game in gale force conditions; after leading for three quarters of the match, I know they will be disappointed with the outcome, but you would not hold that against them if you saw their commitment and focus. On any given Saturday, throughout the College, a lot does go our way, but it's undeniable that when life dishes up its share of disappointment, learning to deal with setbacks is probably the best education for life we can receive.

Wild horses

Out of the left corner of my eye while returning to Pietermaritzburg on the new magnificent highway, two horses were cantering along an on-ramp. Spurred on by traffic, the pair began to gallop and wended their way through trucks and cars into the fast lane. From about 500m ahead of them, and imagining death and destruction was imminent, I slowed down and shifted to the fast lane. Amazingly, behind and around, everyone just slowed down – even the trucks and taxis. Forcing the horses to veer left by blocking their way, I drove with the lead horse a foot away from my passenger window and incredibly, all the vehicles seemed to understand what was needed as they allowed me to guide the horses towards the slow lane. Then a very small white car joined me, and a trucking hero raced to a break in the barriers and positioned his truck so that the 'horse' of the truck blocked the way and the trailer formed a wall. As our blockade slowed them to a stop, the horses stepped reluctantly onto the grass bank and to safety for everyone. I am not always impressed by South African road behaviour, but I was on this occasion, as everyone just understood and helped. A very strange day, indeed.

Not today

It is probably true that the pile of things we can change is always smaller than the pile of things we can't. We should not miss the reality that there are things we can change – and we should work towards those. As I get older and hopefully wiser and more focused in where I spend my energy, I have noticed that when we do the things we can do, the things that seemed impossible have a way of seeming far less insurmountable. A day may well come when there is no more strength to fight against the evil that men do, when the people have forgotten the great things that can and should be done, but today is not that day. So, we fight because we still can, and we fight because we must, and we fight because not fighting brings far worse possibilities than holding our ground.

The words of 2 Chronicles 16:9 can give us courage when we feel depleted: "For the eyes of the Lord are searching to and fro throughout the earth, and He is ready to reveal Himself to be strong on behalf of those whose hearts are completely committed to Him".

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allen van Blerk', with a stylized, cursive script.

Allen van Blerk
PRINCIPAL