



Principal's Weekly Update: 9th February 2026

ST CHARLES COLLEGE

S O U T H A F R I C A

Dear Parents, Guardians and Grandparents

Perhaps you, like me, found yourself praying for the rain to come following two weeks of scorching temperatures. I asked for two batches of 50 mm each so if there's a bit more than you wanted, that could be my fault. If we ever were tempted to think we are not utterly dependent on the providence of God, the baked ground and scorched grass were a great reminder – even the insurance companies defer to 'acts of God'.

I know that the solar array I promised is underwhelmingly absent, but if you look at the SKA arena and AquaPark roofs, you will see that the brackets for the panels are now in place. Thank you to those who responded to the air conditioning appeal. Everyone can make this happen faster by ceding their loyalty card rewards to St Charles College, and if you wish to accelerate the rollout, we are welcoming parents to get together and contribute to their son's home teacher's classroom.

The purpose of education is not to produce educated children

My son was a shock to our system from the very start. I remember a moment when, at six months old, he was already fully mobile and up the jungle gym in a flash. Seconds later, I remember running to pick up his limp body after he plummeted backwards to the ground and lay motionless on the grass. He probably didn't move for around 10 seconds, after which his winded form took a gasping breath, and he began to yell. My instinct was to have the jungle gym removed immediately, but my wife counselled me that he was just going to climb something else and we should rather teach him to climb better.

We are living in a crazy time where schools are under pressure to bypass developmental stages that are fundamental to future adult functioning. Jonathan Haidt states that "Parents should be preparing the child for the road, not the road for the child." Perhaps we have forgotten that adult-confidence comes from children seeing adults navigating bravely through adversity. That is why our playgrounds should not be smooth and flat, because terrain that has no consequences for a misstep does not prepare them for a world that is everything but soft and forgiving.

To move forward, one must move forward

A search will tell you that 70% of formal employment opportunities in South Africa require Mathematics, and only 8.5% (and declining) of South African matriculants obtain more than 50% for Mathematics – that is a problem that politicians don't even speak about. Last year, the country celebrated the highest matric pass in history – with probably the lowest quality of passes ever. If we persist in rewarding and celebrating success in directions that the economy does not want or need, this haystack will keep on building. There is good reason that we set targets for over 80% of our boys to pass AS Level Mathematics.

Tomorrow is a big day

On Tuesday, we will take the whole College to the AquaPark for the first time; two cohorts will go in for a brief assembly and a chance to see what has been done. We will celebrate what promises to help turn this city in a new direction. Whenever there is a lot at stake, we cannot go wrong in turning to Psalm 90:17, which indicates the source of our hope and assurance:

"May the favour of the Lord God rest on us – establish the work of our hands for us – yes establish the work of our hands."

Yours faithfully

Allen van Blerk
PRINCIPAL