



Principal's Weekly Update: 3rd August 2026

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

Dear Parents, Grandparents and Guardians

Back in Action

There is a strain of flu that can render half the population absolutely useless; but when women get it, they seem to take medication and go into overdrive until it's over. As a result of "man-flu" last week, I am not sure how Thursday, Friday or Saturday went for the rest of the world, but I am grateful knowing that we have a strong team of people who, daily and independently, make wise decisions – they are the real strength of the College.

South Africa has some great points, but it also has some really big challenges – the kind that need legislation and votes to bring change. Considering the power of women, it has always intrigued me why women don't unite to tip the world in a better direction. As the majority on the planet and in South Africa, women have the power to redirect social and world order in meaningful ways. Regardless, I am trusting that together, everyone will use their right to vote to make sure better can happen for more people when the November elections come around this year.

Value vs Convenience

St Charles College has had to fight some hard fights to keep moving forward over the past 151 years. One of those battles has been choosing over and over again between value and convenience – and choosing value every time. So, while I regret that parking is getting tougher, I am grateful that we chose to spend the money on a real science lab – even if it meant leaving parking as an unsolved puzzle.

Now there is some hope. Kind and discerning parents have noticed the old 4x4 route I tested out; they have seen the 150th gates and the Golden Horse access to Aquapark; they have spoken to Mr Holcomb, and now they are helping us to formalise the overflow parking space between the College and the racecourse. This means that soon senior boys can be dropped off at the 150th gates and parents can get to work and collect their sons in record time – and peak traffic on Harwin Road can be reduced by more than a hundred cars per day. I think that's exactly how I'd like citizens of Pietermaritzburg to think.

Trial exams

I am sorry for teachers who have to set them and parents who have to support teenage boys who have to write them. Nevertheless, trial examinations at St Charles College are exactly what they are called – an important preparation for the real thing.

The exams will show where mastery has not occurred, where mystery still remains, and they provide an excellent starting point for the focused conversations that follow. For Matric parents, you'll no doubt be finding out now that your son is quite the individual and that one logical day does not follow into the next. Boys all have a rather sudden realisation that time is going way too fast and they can regress at the very moment when you need them to be extra-responsible. They need unreserved support and encouragement (fighting at this stage does no good at all). Just keep them moving forward. You may think they know nothing, but that is not true – they have come a long way and just need to be focused on doing what's in front of them.

Action matters

It is easy to be proud of the Commonwealth Games athletes who have worked so hard to represent their supporters and the country. Their medals are symbols of hours of invested time, and it's very encouraging to see this next generation doing the work required to achieve great things. St Charles College is framed by the challenge of being '*The school Africa needs*'. In that is an invitation and an acceptance that change is required and we are going to be what is needed to fuel that change. What really matters, if we care, is to take action. "Let us not love with words or speech but with actions." 1 JOHN 3:18

Perhaps the value of this Monday can be determined by the good thing each one of us decides to do today.

Yours faithfully

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

Allen van Blerk
PRINCIPAL