

Dear Parents

An unfortunate incident of an individual once again failing to follow procedures and protocol, has prompted the board to issue the following formal statement to this effect.

The school has very clear and precise operating procedures (as set out by the Department of Basic Education and updated on the 2nd of August 2020), that allowed us the opening of the school on the 1st of June 2020 and which also keeps all our learners, teachers and staff safe. This permission was granted, as our school was deemed fully compliant and also went beyond what certain requirements in terms of protective wear, entry procedures, infrastructure changes, timetable adaptations and classroom designations were asked for. Everything has been running smoothly, some of which you have experienced yourselves in the past eight weeks despite scares and cases.

Our Head of Operations, Mr. Marc Grüne, was appointed as our COVID-19 Compliance Officer, as the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) require, per the Department of Health and Department of Basic Education's gazetted notices. All cases on the school grounds or externally, are reported to a direct contact at the Department of Basic Education, as per the gazetted requirements and the District Memorandum 196 of 2020.

The Schulverein Governing Board and parent representatives on two occasions inspected relevant school facilities and documentation, before we first officially opened different parts of the school. These are also continuously updated as we receive new information from the National Departments (Government is also in unknown territory in dealing with this pandemic).

As part of the procedures, there is a clear protocol when a COVID case is confirmed – applicable to the school times and for after-hours reporting. We also have an obligation not to spread panic or victimise people who are taken ill. In addition, we are dependent on our school community for information about their potential contacts outside of the school grounds. In all cases brought to our attention (suspected or confirmed), the Standard Operating Procedures have been followed. We are most prudent to not spread unnecessary panic, to respect our community's privacy, and not add pressure to those already dealing with the disease, its symptoms and effects.

In order to further avoid panic and overreaction, we will always inform the necessary close contact parties as per our Standard Operating Procedures (again, this is according to the stipulated laws and requirements). Close contact is officially defined as: a person within 1.5m, more than 15 minutes and without a mask. Our school has a mandatory mask requirement, enforces social distancing, has extended cleaning protocols, does regular fogging, regular hand and surface cleaning and more. Our teachers avoid close contact with learners, always wear masks and/or shields and disinfect regularly. Nevertheless, we inform all the parents of the relevant contact classes and ask for vigilance and monitoring of possible symptoms, and request parent notification to the school. All our staff are aware of all regulations, are pro-active, even with a suspected contact - the policy is to always observe isolation protocols.

To close the school is not, and will never be, the decision of a single person. The school leadership and operational management are supported and steered by the Governing Board of the Schulverein (representing the interests of all its members and responsible for the actions of the Verein, as the law demands). Only after very careful considerations and with the agreement of all parties, can such a far-reaching and important decision be made. Communication will also be from all these involved parties.



D S P
Deutsche
Internationale
Schule
Pretoria

Simon Vermooten Rd,
Die Wilgers, Pretoria,

P O Box 912-727
Silverton 0127
South Africa

Tel 012 803-4106/7/8
Fax 012 803-4109
E-mail:
dsp@dsp.gp.school.za
Home page:
www.dspretoria.co.za

The official school channels of communication to our community remain the same (as reiterated in previous communications): Email (with official letterhead and signatories), SMS (for quick information, signed as DSP) and the DSP website. Please take note of this again. If a message is not communicated via these official channels, it is not an official message. The wildfire nature of social media makes it the responsibility of all parents to fact check (as with all media usage) and to relay information responsibly and objectively.

The action of the concerned board member, Mrs. Henriette Vienings, in sending out a message via the PRC communication channel (via Prof David Katerere on the PRC informal WhatsApp groups), was never sanctioned or approved by the Schulverein Governing Board. It should also not have been entertained and sent out to our community by the PRC. WhatsApp will never be used to distribute an official school message, especially one of such gravity. Mrs. Vienings' position as COVID-19 committee member (a newly formed board committee), was always intended to support our officially appointed COVID-19 compliance officer, Mr. Marc Grüne (HoO). It was not formed to issue directives to management, staff or parents.

We will investigate more internally and then provide feedback on this untenable situation at the next PRC meeting, to comply with transparency and good governance. We will also inform you of the specific measures put in place, to avoid a repetition of such an indefensible occurrence at a very sensitive time and with vital exams pending.

The safety of our learners, staff and parents, is always our highest priority. We continue to work exceedingly hard to minimise the risks to all involved. We are absolutely aligned to all required policies and procedures. In fact, our commitment goes even beyond the legally required levels. For more information and details, our continuously updated COVID-19 procedures are available in the school office for your perusal.


Please keep the school informed about any suspected COVID-19 cases, keep to the government required social distancing and mask wearing measures, do not spread panic and thereby help us to keep the school open, safe and healthy.

Please stay calm, safe and healthy!


Mit freundlichen Grüßen
With kind regards



Andreas Wagner
Chairman of the Board



Dalena Beyers
Vice Chair of the Board



Beate Kiehn
Principal



Marc Grüne
Head of Operations &
CV19 Compliance Officer