



Usutu Forest School

17 April 2020

Dear Parents

It has been a month since School closed and a great deal has happened in that time. I think I can safely speak on behalf of the teachers when I say that we are missing the children and missing the happy and vibrant atmosphere at School when they are around.

During this time away you have been asked to assist your child with online schooling and we thank you for your support and collaboration with the teachers in this unfamiliar space we all find ourselves in. Your understanding and indulgence of the task is greatly appreciated.

I would just like to update you on the proposed way forward, as well as give feedback from meetings held between the Management Team and the Governing Council.

ONLINE TEACHING

I am sure that you are keen to know what the School has planned for the coming weeks regarding the continuation of our academic programme. The following points provide information in this regard.

- School will re-open as planned on the 5th of May, online.
- The Management Team have spent a lot of time putting together a phased-in approach as to the way forward regarding online teaching. Whilst there are a multitude of online teaching platforms available, the Team has found *Google Classroom* to be the most suitable for teachers, parents and children, and as a result it will be our preferred platform. The Pre-primary will be using *Seesaw* as a teaching tool. More detailed information will be sent out weekly by email on Thursdays, and you should keep a look out for these updates. *In order to ensure that you receive all information regarding online teaching, I again appeal to parents to ensure that your e-mail addresses are updated and correct on our database. Should you have changed your details, please notify Cheryl Fourie on chezbez@swazi.net.*
- *Zoom* will be used for meetings and for chatting with the children. We feel that it is important that we keep the connection with the children as well as the classroom environment with these regular check-in meetings.

"Semper Sursum - Always Aim High"

Usutu Forest School

Jabula Crescent • Mhlambanyatsi • Eswatini • P.O. Box 264 • Mhlambanyatsi H115 • Eswatini

Tel: (+268) 2467 4134 • (+268) 2467 4412 • Cell: (+268) 7602 0594

Email: headmaster@usutuschool.ac.sz • www.usutuschool.ac.sz

Executive Head: *David Jennings B.Com (Hons); HDE*



- Children will be required to have access to a device and connectivity for Google Classroom, Seesaw and Zoom to be effectively implemented at home.
- Learning remotely is both synchronous and asynchronous. Asynchronous learning means that the pupils can do the work in their own time (Google Classroom/Seesaw), synchronous learning implies teachers and pupils meet online in realtime through videoconferencing or live chatting (Zoom).
- We do acknowledge that this is our first time venturing into this kind of teaching and learning, and we will adjust and improve where we meet up with any issues as we roll this out.

I would like to thank the Management Team for all their time and commitment that they have put into the research and the implementation of this programme. Their dedication to this task is truly appreciated and valued.

STAFFING

As mentioned in the last newsletter, Mr De Beer and Ms Tietjens have left us. We are pleased to inform you that we have made internal appointments to fill both these vacancies. Mrs Mattheus will continue in Grade 5 in the place of Mr De Beer, whilst Mrs Pocock will be taking over the Grade 4 English from Ms Tietjens. We believe that both these experienced and qualified teachers will add great value to their new roles, and create the stability we need at this time.

We wish Mrs Fakudze, our Speech and Language Therapist all the best as she leaves us temporarily to have her baby, due in early May. We have secured the services of a locum therapist, Ms Delisa Mhlanga and look forward to her joining our online teaching team when we re-open on 5th May.

FEES

A letter was e-mailed to all parents, and is also available on the Ed-Admin Portal, under "News", informing parents of the Council decision to offer a 5% discount to parents who pay their Term Two and Term Three school fees in full by 31st May 2020. All details are contained in the letter but please do contact Mrs Johnston on bursar@usutuschool.ac.sz or 2467 4282 for further information.

TERM CALENDAR

It has been difficult at this stage to finalise the new term dates for the remainder of the year until such time as we are informed when schools are scheduled to re-open. As soon as this is communicated to us, we will be in a position to send out the revised school term dates.

The same applies for the revised school events and activities.

"Semper Sursum - Always Aim High"

Usutu Forest School

Jabula Crescent • Mhlambanyatsi • Eswatini • P.O. Box 264 • Mhlambanyatsi H115 • Eswatini

Tel: (+268) 2467 4134 • (+268) 2467 4412 • Cell: (+268) 7602 0594

Email: headmaster@usutuschool.ac.sz • www.usutuschool.ac.sz

Executive Head: *David Jennings B.Com (Hons); HDE*



GRADE AND SPORT TOURS

Please be advised that a decision has been taken to cancel the following tours for this year:

Grade 4 overnight excursion to Mlilwane

Grade 5 trip to Sugar Bay

Grade 6 trip to Seola Zimbali

Grade 7 trip to Infinite Adventures

Form 1 trip to Spirit of Adventure

Form 3 tour to Cape Town

All scheduled sport tours to South Africa

It is the feeling of the Management Team that the health and safety of your children are our priority and it would be irresponsible of us to continue with these trips. In addition to this we do not wish to place further financial burden and stress on parents for these trips.

Further to this the Family Fun Day has also been cancelled for this year.

FINALLY

I do not believe that we, in our wildest thoughts, could have imagined ever finding ourselves in this situation, let alone experiencing a worldwide pandemic of this magnitude.

Given the above, I would like to assure you of the teachers', and the school's commitment to do everything in our power to play our part in ensuring that teaching and learning takes place in the best possible way. We are asking of the teachers to be flexible, be adaptable, be prepared to teach out of their comfort zones, embrace this new methodology with the best possible outcome in mind. It remains our responsibility commitment to do our best to ensure that the children in our care achieve the Grade outcomes by the end of the year to ensure that they are able to move onto the next Grade in 2021.

"Semper Sursum - Always Aim High"

Usutu Forest School

Jabula Crescent • Mhlambanyatsi • Eswatini • P.O. Box 264 • Mhlambanyatsi H115 • Eswatini

Tel: (+268) 2467 4134 • (+268) 2467 4412 • Cell: (+268) 7602 0594

Email: headmaster@usutuschool.ac.sz • www.usutuschool.ac.sz

Executive Head: *David Jennings B.Com (Hons); HDE*

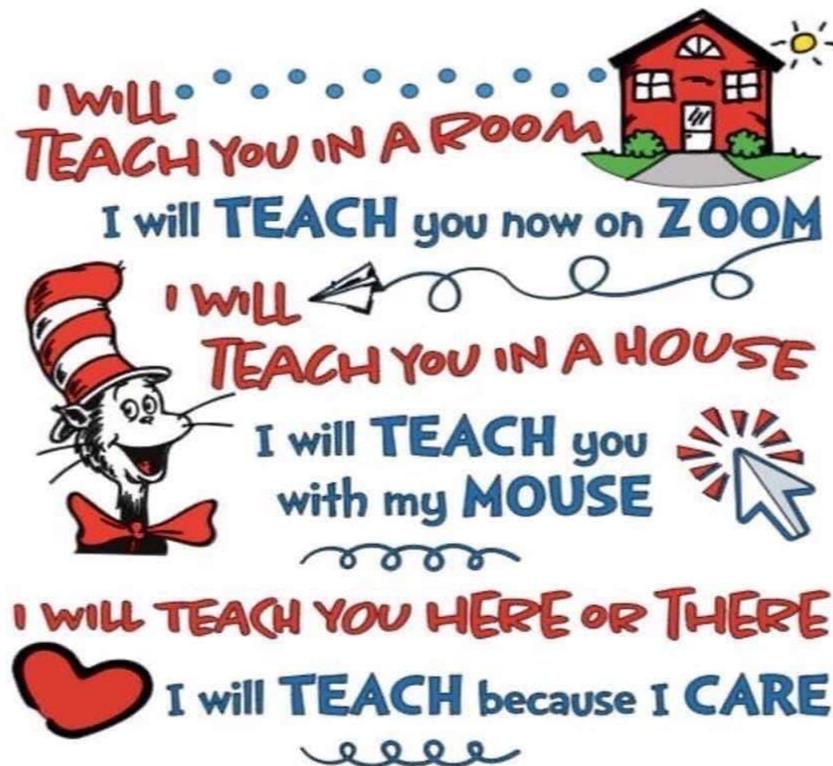


I thank you for your continued support and understanding as we navigate this together, and I once again assure you of my, the Management Team and the teachers' obligation to your child's education.

Until such time as we are able return to school I ask that you take care, stay safe and look after yourselves.

Warm regards

DAVID JENNINGS
EXECUTIVE HEAD



"Semper Sursum - Always Aim High"

Usutu Forest School

Jabula Crescent • Mhlambanyatsi • Eswatini • P.O. Box 264 • Mhlambanyatsi H115 • Eswatini

Tel: (+268) 2467 4134 • (+268) 2467 4412 • Cell: (+268) 7602 0594

Email: headmaster@usutuschool.ac.sz • www.usutuschool.ac.sz

Executive Head: *David Jennings B.Com (Hons); HDE*



“Semper Sursum - Always Aim High”

Usutu Forest School

Jabula Crescent • Mhlambanyatsi • Eswatini • P.O. Box 264 • Mhlambanyatsi H115 • Eswatini

Tel: (+268) 2467 4134 • (+268) 2467 4412 • Cell: (+268) 7602 0594

Email: headmaster@usutuschool.ac.sz • www.usutuschool.ac.sz

Executive Head: *David Jennings B.Com (Hons); HDE*

