

EVERYTHING MATTERS

2026



T W E N T Y T W E N T Y S I X

ST DUNSTAN'S PRE-SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

TRINITY TERM | ISSUE 25 | 31 JULY 2026

From the Rector's Desk



Dear parents and guardians

Every school phase matters! I sometimes hear parents saying that they will send their children to an independent high school while settling for a less expensive Early Childhood Development (ECD) phase. While I understand the financial reasoning, I would argue that it is in this sector that the foundations of a child's future learning patterns are formed.

The purpose of Early Childhood Development (ECD) is not simply to prepare children academically for Grade 1. In fact, at this stage it is not a competition to see who can read or complete worksheets first. The aim is to cultivate curious, confident, self-regulated learners who have the cognitive, social, emotional and language foundations to flourish throughout their schooling. To achieve this, we engage our students in purposeful play. We plan for and encourage play that is self-directed, imaginative, physically active and socially interactive. It is through this intentional planning that students establish the skills and confidence necessary for the more formal learning that follows in the next phase of schooling – the Foundation Phase of Grades 1 to 3.

Although brain development continues throughout childhood, adolescence and into the mid-twenties, what is true is that during the ECD years sensory, language and emotional regulation undergo rapid development. The first five years of life are a period of extraordinary brain development. It is estimated that during these first few years, the brain forms more than one million new neural connections every second, creating the foundation for later learning. Our ECD curriculum is packed with a diverse range of learning opportunities and facilities that provide for a broad spectrum of play-based activities. These activities include imaginative play, exploration, construction play (making things), creative arts, physical play, sensory play, social play, storytelling, scientific enquiry, collecting, categorising and the performing arts, amongst others. Each has a specific time and place within our curriculum.

Neuroscientists and educational psychologists emphasise that later learning relies significantly on early neural wiring. If foundational neural pathways are not stimulated early, later remediation becomes significantly more difficult and resource-intensive. The conclusion is clear: Early Childhood Development matters!

One advantage of having all the school phases on one property is that it becomes easy to develop common themes, traditions and values that encompass the entire College. Earlier this year, the Matric Invitation Handout took place in the Pre-School with much excitement. This gave our Pre-School students the opportunity to engage socially and perform as they walked up the red carpet to hand over the invitations. Other significant cross-school activities have included St Dunstan's Day and the opening of the Memorial Hall. For the first time on the "new" campus, we had enough space to host the entire school under one roof on our own property. This multipurpose hall is destined to be a game changer – hosting honours evenings, concerts and other major events with ease. It is not a facility just for the College, but for the Pre-School too.

The Big Colour Walk, another highlight in the Pre-School calendar, gave your children the opportunity to explore beyond their immediate environment into the spaces that will later become so meaningful to them. The Don Jones Oval is our main cricket ground, but it is also our full 400m fine-lawn athletics track.

Enhancing our standing as a leading independent, co-educational Christian school.

As the term draws to a close, I take this opportunity to thank the Pre-School team, under the leadership of Mrs Millner, for a job well done, and for all the care, effort and love they invest in the lives of our children to make it such a special place.

The School Council has the important responsibility of driving strategy and ensuring sound financial oversight. Without its input and direction, we would not have the Memorial Hall, the new parking areas and the facility upgrades that we now enjoy. I thank the Council and Lorraine Barry, as Chairperson, for their dedicated and professional stewardship of our magnificent school. As unpaid volunteers, they truly uphold our school motto: "I Serve".

Finally, I wish you all a restful August holiday. I trust that you will be able to step away from your busy schedules, spend some special time with your families and enjoy the opportunity to recharge. May every moment count.

Mr Warwick Taylor

"Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realise they were the big things."
- Robert Brault

Upcoming Birthdays!

2 August

**OLIVIA
VERWEY**

3 August

**TANNAH
TUCKER**

7 August

**ANGELINA
FICK**

**WISHING YOU ALL
A HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

Waiting Class

3 - 7 August	Munchkin Class
10 August - 7 September	School Holidays



Don't forget

SIBLINGS...

Apply now for 2028 as certain grades are already waitlisted and placement for siblings cannot be guaranteed!

What's Happening When?

TERM 2 EVENTS

Thursday, 6 August

Grade 0 Sports Day | 11:00 – 12:00

Friday, 7 August

School Closes for Term 2 | 12:45

Dress-Up - Recycled Runway

Tuesday, 8 September

School Opens for Term 3

A Warm Welcome

A heartfelt congratulations to the Mateman family on the arrival of their beautiful baby boy, Ezra!

We are so excited to celebrate this precious new addition and wish the family an abundance of love, joy and treasured memories as they embark on this wonderful new chapter together.

A very special congratulations also goes to **Israel Mateman**, from the Bee Class on becoming a proud big brother! We know he will embrace his new role with love and excitement and we wish the entire family many happy moments as they welcome little Ezra home.



Tiny Triumphs: Big Wins from Our Little Stars!

Congratulations to **Sarah Williams**, from the Turtle Class, on her incredible achievements across two recent dance competitions!

At the **Just Dance Performing Arts South Africa Dance Competition**, Sarah earned multiple **High Gold** and **High Silver** medals, **1st Place** in her **Mini Acrobatic Solo**, a **Spotlight Award** for her **Tap** performance and was crowned **Best Overall Mini Dancer**.

She continued her success at the **SADTA National Eisteddfod**, receiving **Honours with Distinction** (95%) for her **Tap/Show Dance** and **Honours** (93%) for her **Acrobatic** performance.

We are incredibly proud of Sarah's dedication, talent and outstanding achievements.

Congratulations, Sarah we can not wait to see what you accomplish next!



Congratulations to **Tatiana Shamsodeen**, from the Flamingo Class, on her incredible achievements at the Benoni Eisteddfod!

Tatiana received an **A+** for her **Eie Keuse Poësie** and an exceptional **A++** for her **Prescribed Poetry**.

Congratulations, Tatiana, on your wonderful accomplishment! Your hard work, confidence and dedication have truly shone through.

We are incredibly proud of Tatiana's dedication, talent and outstanding achievements.

Congratulations, Tatiana we can not wait to see what you accomplish next!

Celebrating the Courage of our children

We would like to acknowledge the incredible bravery of one of our Munchkin children, **Kylah**.

Recently, Kylah found herself in a very frightening situation when her mommy became seriously ill at home. Remaining remarkably calm while her daddy was working late, Kylah called an ambulance, gave the emergency services her home address, and explained that her mommy needed urgent help. Thanks to her quick thinking and courage, her mommy received urgent medical care, where doctors were able to identify and treat a life-threatening condition.

We are incredibly proud of Kylah for showing such extraordinary bravery, presence of mind and resilience. She reminds us that courage comes in all sizes and we celebrate the remarkable difference she made through her calm and caring actions.

Well done, Kylah. We are so proud of you!



People Who Love Us Day



People Who Love Us Day



People Who Love Us Day

The Hands That Held Our Hands

Before we knew the weight of words,
Or how the world turns cold,

You built a refuge out of love,

A safety to behold.

To grandmas with your gentle touch,

And stories softly told,

To granddads with your quiet wisdom,

Woven through the gold.

To aunts who act like second mothers,

Cheering every stride,

To uncles bringing laughter,

Standing proudly by our side.

You taught us how to stand up tall,

You patched each scraped-up knee,

You saw the potential in our eyes

Before we could even see.

For every meal you made with heart,

For every steadying hand,

For being the roots that keep us grounded,

The place where we can land—

Thank you for the sacrifices,

The unspoken, quiet grace.

Because of you, we walk the world

Knowing we have a place.

