Dear Parents and Guardians

Did you know that Tuesday (20 March) was International World Day of Happiness? I do hope you had a great day, but also hope that it is not restricted to one day! After the release of the World Happiness Reports, where South Africa sadly rated very poorly, we all need to be more conscious of spreading happiness, well-being and the “feel good” factor around and not being so self-centered. Sometimes we need to consciously think about happiness and how to enhance it (our own and that of others), it isn’t always easy, but we can all do our own little bit! On reading more about the World Happiness report, I came across a wonderful article entitled “The Great Dream – 10 factors that are important for our well-being and what we can do about them”. The link to the article/booklet is copied below:

http://www.actionforhappiness.org/media/530511/ten_keys_guidebook.pdf

Please take a look at it, comment on it, perhaps print it out and stick it on your fridge - it’s about re-thinking our priorities and how our actions can affect our happiness. It doesn’t only have relevance for us as adults and parents, but is so important for this and the next generation to learn as well. Teach these concepts to your children. Take particular note of the GREAT DREAM acronym and its accompanying actions! Enjoy.

The end of the first term is here and with it, the realization of so many different achievements by the children in a variety of aspects of school life. Particularly pleasing is to listen to how many of the children’s goals have either been achieved or surpassed and the encouragement this gives the children to strive to “raise the bar” further. We are very grateful to God and we thank the Him for His protection over our school. What term is not busy these days, with the scope of activities increasing on a regular basis?

My sincere thanks to the staff team at New Hanover who continue to give so much of themselves (and to go the extra mile) to ensure each child feels like they really matter and are cared for. My thanks again to many of you parents who are such stars in supporting and assisting in numerous ways around the school, for the benefit of the children, for which New Hanover Prep. exists. Our children are most fortunate to have staff and parents who are looking out for their best interests.

Our 15th New Hanover Prep Bass Competition was a huge success and once again attracted a very large field of anglers (surpassing the 1000 anglers mark yet again), marketing our school in the process and raising much needed funds. As always, I was amazed and enthralled by the event and proud to be associated with it.

To all who were involved in approaching sponsors, food prep, registration, manning dams, ticket sales, set up and every other aspect of the day, a very big thank you! Without each individual who played a part in the event, it would not have been possible let alone a success – what a team!

Thank you to the fishing competition committee, who were so involved in the months of preparation and who put so much into this important event. Dieter Oellermann, however, deserves a special mention, for his incredible efforts in making the Fishing Competition something so phenomenal. It certainly is an unrivalled fishing competition!
We are pleased to be able to offer our children a wide range of opportunities that allow them to explore different spheres while discovering and honing their talents. How exciting it has been to see the enthusiasm and excitement of the children participating in the Grade 2 and 3 plays this week, their confidence on stage is wonderful and a credit to the hard work of their teachers Janet Frenzel and Shirleen Redinger. We continue to pray for Werner Redinger as he continues his recovery from surgery. Sadly, he did need to be readmitted to hospital on Tuesday afternoon, meaning that Shirleen missed the Grade 3 play, yet it still went off so well – testament to her hard and thorough work throughout the term. A huge thank you to Miss Jess Van Eeden who “stepped up to the plate” and took charge of the play on Tuesday night, as well as to all those parents who assisted!

We have had many events, activities and talents showcased this term: the various galas, a number of cricket and girls’ tennis matches, tours and excursions, puppet shows, talks etc. The results achieved and enjoyment had by the children across all spheres, have been most pleasing. The feedback from the Parent/Teacher interviews has been mostly very positive as children work hard to reach their potential. I believe it has been a happy and productive first term of 2018. It is unfortunate that not all parents attended these interviews. I urge you to make contact with the staff and set up an appointment early in the second term if you were one of these parents who did not attend.

Some of you would have noticed that we received a whole lot of hockey astro-turf this week. We have been incredibly blessed once again. An anonymous donor purchased this second-hand astro turf for us. They have purchased enough astro to give us an entire quarter field – 23m x 55 m: 1265 m² (big enough to host mini-hockey, 6-a-side matches and of course practices). We are so incredibly grateful and cannot thank this donor enough. You’ll be astounded to find out just how much a quarter field of astro-turf actually costs! I remind and assure parents that our priority for our fundraising is still the upgrade or rebuilding of our swimming pool. We have been re-quoted on this project and are currently sourcing funding assistance for this project. The astro-turf has not cost the school a cent and as mentioned we are very grateful for this donation. I remind you all too that during the holidays, we will be undertaking upgrades to our Grade One, Two and Three classrooms. I can’t wait to see how they turn out. If you haven’t visited the Grade Six and Seven classes of late, do pop your head in and see what a difference the new curtains in these classes have made. Isn’t it lovely to see this constant upgrading and improvement taking place?

Of course the very exciting news this week has been the appointment of Mr. Lance Baguley as the new Headmaster of New Hanover Prep. I thank the selection committee and board members for their time and efforts in overseeing this process. It was a thorough screening and interview process, with some very high-quality applicants applying for the position. We congratulate Lance on his appointment (commencing at the beginning of the third term) and trust that he, his wife Heather and their children; Nina, Tomas and Amy, will be very happy here, will settle into the community and will continue to take the school forward.

We will arrange for Mr Baguley to come and meet with the staff and children and have some hand-over time with myself during the course of next term.
You would have noticed that the provisional second term calendar has been sent home (D6) - this is subject to change. Please take note of the various events taking place next term and diarize them, particularly those taking place soon after we return to school. School will reopen (children return) on Tuesday the 17th of April for the second term. The staff will return and the office will be open (for uniform purchases and queries etc.) on Monday the 16th April. Next term is the official Cross Country term where our team competes in events (Friday afternoons) against other schools. I encourage all those interested in Cross Country and those interested in improving their fitness to join our Cross Country Club next term.

During the holidays please check your children's school clothing. Some have outgrown outfits and require bigger ones. Please check that everything is marked, some markings have been erased or come loose and some items still haven't been marked! The amount of unmarked lost property is appalling! Please check that you don't have anyone else's clothing in school bags or cupboards, it is very easy for items to end up in the wrong home!

Earth Hour is a major environmental event in the world and every year, WWF encourages people all over the world to turn off their lights for one hour in a symbolic gesture to pledge their commitment to combating climate change. We encourage our families to support this initiative and to use it to reinforce with their children the importance of looking after our Earth. Set your phone alarms to remind you to turn off lights between 8:30 and 9:30 on Saturday the 24th of March.

My thanks to the children for their many and varied contributions to New Hanover Prep this term, to all the staff for their continued passion and professionalism and to the parent body for your valued support and assistance in so many different aspects of school life. I am certain you will all be looking forward to spending time with your families over the Easter holiday period and I wish you all a very Blessed Easter and happy, relaxing holidays. Please be sure to take time to; read with, play with, learn something new with, spent time with and laugh with, your children. Remember too that Easter is a time to reflect and to celebrate the most important event in history, the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Warm regards

James
The principle goal of education is to create men who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done – men who are creative, inventive and discoverers.  

Jean Piaget