

Dear Parents and Guardians

RESUMPTION OF SCHOOL SPORTS FIXTURES

As you are by this time no doubt aware, all sporting codes and cultural activities at schools' level have been given the go-ahead through the publication of Gazette 44922 (1 August 2021) via the Department of Basic Education. This includes contact sports practices and matches, choir and debating activities, et cetera. We are naturally very pleased about this, particularly because of the huge educational value of what happens, not only in the classrooms in our schools, but also outside of them.

In addition to the obvious advantages to physical and emotional health alike, so much else in the development of boys is built on the foundation of both cooperative activity and positive competition, not only on an individual level, but perhaps even more so in a team or on a group level.

Importantly, however, this resumption of activities comes together with a set of stringent regulations which have been put in place to protect all our boys, their families, and members of the broader community from the still-very-present threat of COVID-19. Although some of us will doubtless hold different views of these regulations, as schools we understand the enormous importance of having our boys participate and compete at this time. The euphoria of derby days and other big activities, together with all the fun and value which they bring will return in time, but for the moment that is a secondary objective. Right now, we need our boys to play.

Taking all the above and the relevant regulations themselves into account, we have agreed with like-minded schools that the following will apply across the board until further relaxations are allowed:

1. School sporting fixtures are primarily about the camaraderie of playing and the health associated with exercise - this first step in our return to sport should be our primary focus.
2. We need to ensure we avoid creating a throng at (or outside) any of our schools. This means we need to discourage the mass of interested people pressed up against our boundary fences, parking their vehicles on the pavements and generally nullifying both the practice and spirit of the regulations in place.
3. In terms of the regulations it is quite clear that NO SPECTATORS can be allowed at matches.
4. Boys playing away fixtures will leave the host school to return home as soon as it is viable after their own game has been concluded.
6. Live streaming of games or other activities, where schools have been able to secure equipment to put this in place, will be encouraged so that parents and other interested parties can be 'virtually' included in watching the teams compete.

In addition, of course, we need to continue to be vigilant in our collective fight against the pandemic and any emergence of an additional wave. We cannot take the chance of having the permission to proceed with fixtures being revoked in the light of a further outbreak of COVID-19 which comes about because of one school and its community not adhering to the letter and spirit of the regulations – this would spoil things for everyone.

As a group of Boys' Schools in Gauteng representing the interests of education and boys' schools, we endorse these protocols, and request that we all, individuals, and institutions alike, adhere to

the regulations and the spirit in which we are approaching our return to fixtures. It is believed that the entertaining of any guests, parents or community members on the campus is in direct contradiction of both the letter and the spirit of the regulations. We will therefore not be providing refreshments or access to anyone other than those directly involved – direct participants, coaches, first aiders, referees, umpires, and the like. We do not believe that any bending of regulations or flirting with the spirit and letter of the law constitutes the right thing to do. Above all, we should not risk compromising the activities of the boys and the good name and standing of the school.

Thank you for your support in these matters.

Kind regards

The Heads and Principals of:
Pretoria Boys' High School
Afrikaanse Hoër Seunskool
Jeppe High School for Boys
King Edward VII School
Parktown Boys' High School
Springs Boys' High School