



HILTON COLLEGE

*A letter from*  
**the Head**

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 3rd term of 2018. This little world of ours seems to spin ever faster and faster! This term holds a different rhythm to it, with a shift on the sports field, in the classroom and on the stage.

On the sports fields the majority of our boys participate in the 'beautiful game' and it is a delight to see many boys shine with their skill often honed in primary school. We are making great strides in soccer and the boys enjoy this game and this season immensely.

On the stage, the annual Hilton Arts Festival is a celebration of all forms of art: drama, fine art and music. Our boys are privileged to get a preview of many shows on Jongezi Day, and then enjoy more productions during the Festival (hopefully accompanied by many parents). The dates are the 14th - 16th September.

Once again, our world is filled with promise.

In the classroom, our Matrics in particular, begin preparation for their final exams in earnest with trials prelims scheduled for the end of August and finals from mid-October. Our Grade 11s will enjoy a trip to Johannesburg to visit businesses in our much celebrated work-exposure week. Our Grade 8s will enjoy an extended period on the Estate at the end of August in our ongoing endeavour to ensure that education is holistic and all-encompassing.



At the beginning of this term, and in the aftermath of the hype of our winter sport season, I thought I would draw your attention to some thoughts on key aspects of learning.

All learning is social and emotional.

Unless we create the optimal conditions for our boys to feel loved, accepted, appreciated and safe, we seriously hinder the possibility of their thriving in their learning. Teaching boys is a delicate art, there is the need to be firm AND fair, forgiving AND principled.

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From a teacher's perspective, relationship with each pupil is paramount. Where there is a lack of trust from either party, the social and emotional pact is fragile and learning is inhibited. If we think back to our own days at school we will often remember a particular teacher with whom we connected - this was most probably the teacher from whom we learned the most. Great teachers work hard at developing strong, open, honest relationships with their pupils to ensure each pupil excels.

Boys learn quickly. They figure out whom they can trust and whom they can test. This is normal behaviour. Great teachers come alongside and work with boys to ensure that they begin to take ownership of their learning; great teachers have high expectations of their pupils.

Comparisons seldom help, although our world is built upon them. In many ways comparison creates an environment that undermines acceptance and self-appreciation, and in so doing can inhibit learning, especially in adolescents. Each boy is encouraged to learn and grow at his pace and in his way.

Boys must also feel safe in their boarding houses. Living in fear of ridicule or of being the victim of bullying, either physical or verbal, undermines their ability to learn. This is why we are deliberate in our endeavour to eliminate any and all forms of negative social behaviour in every dorm and across every grade. Some seniors find this difficult to understand at times, given the widely accepted construct that older boys deserve privilege at the expense of younger boys. Our contention is that older boys do deserve certain privilege as this comes with greater responsibility, however, this may never be at the expense of another.

Many of our boys are supremely happy at Hilton. They enjoy a genuine sense of belonging and a strong camaraderie that binds them in a somewhat peculiar, yet inspiring sense of brotherhood. Certain boys, however, battle with a feeling of needing to conform. They perceive the dominant culture not to include them. In my perfect school there is NO dominant, exclusive culture but rather a culture of tolerance and acceptance; a culture of EMBRACING OTHERNESS; a culture of INCLUSION and of a CELEBRATION of difference and uniqueness. I'm not absolutely sure how one creates this non-dominant culture but it begins with acceptance, with the celebration of difference, with choosing to learn about and with each other, with not putting people down, with ensuring one does to others as one would have others do to oneself.

We will continue, boldly, to champion inclusion and a celebration of difference such that every young man can feel safe and secure so that learning, which is above all social and emotional, can flourish. We draw learners from all strata of South African society and from over 20 countries around the world. Our teaching, maintenance, cleaning and kitchen staff have all had interesting life journeys of their own. Our boys are in a perfect position to step out beyond their comfort zones and to get to know an other's story.

May I encourage you to assist your sons in ensuring that they are connecting with their dorm mates, with their teachers, with their housemaster and tutor, in order to ensure that the social and emotional pact is secure?

I look forward to a tremendous Term 3.

Regards,  
George