



8 February 2018

Dear Parents

At a recent meeting of IEB Primary School principals, we explored a UNESCO report detailing global research on what made a school "happy". In a world which seems to place too high a value on material success, personal comparison and giving children "competitive edge", this report tackles the growing concern that children are not spending enough time just "being".

Examining extensive studies of children between the ages of 8 -12 on the key components to sustaining happiness, the overwhelming contributing finding was that children who spend time with people they love are the happiest. This time could be with parents, friends or even their beloved pets. When children were asked to choose between being a child who has access to any material item they need or being able to spend time with a parent, almost every child chose more time with parents.

Other factors contributing to a general sense of well-being and happiness also included being outdoors and engaging in fun, simple activities. Once upon a time, childhood was filled with endless days spent outside. Imaginations ran wild and children made their own fun with nothing but a few Matchbox cars and an old cardboard box. They played, they learned, and they socialized. But most of all, they had fun! Other tips to happiness include eating on time, getting enough sleep, feeling heard and giving our children unconditional love.

Interestingly, very few children mentioned their material possessions when asked about what makes them happy. There is most certainly a lesson for us as parents in these findings. Many children indicated that they felt stressed by taking part in too many extramural activities (although many of them were not capable of self regulating these activities). For some children, life has become too scripted, leaving very little time for spontaneity.

## Dates To D I A R I S E

### 14 February

Friendship Day  
Dress in pink, red or white

### 24 February

Discovery Open Day

### 21 March

School and Public Holiday  
(school and after-care closed)

### 19-23 March

Environmental Week

### 19, 20, 22 March

School Photographs

### 23 March

Junior Primary Sports Day

### 26 March

Parent / Teacher Meetings  
(late evening)



### Recycling Duty

Monday  
12 February  
Gr 1 Wagtails

Others felt worried and pressurised by the idea of having to perform and reach high grades academically, while others felt overwhelmed by not winning in their sports teams.

As a school, we also have a part to play in promoting happiness for our children by:

- \* Encouraging parental involvement and a strong sense of belonging to a community
- \* Creating a sense of family in the school environment
- \* Actively promoting and instilling positive values, attitudes and practices
- \* Engaging in social outreach activities, promoting empathy and understanding of belonging to a “bigger community”
- \* Promoting and growing an understanding of other cultures both within and outside the school context
- \* Valuing mistakes as part of the learning process
- \* Teaching students to ask questions
- \* Enforcing a realistic homework policy, giving our children space to engage in other activities or just time to play
- \* Giving our children regular and constructive feedback

For most of us a simple measure of a happy school is when a child wakes up eager to get to school each day. I am proud to say that gauging the happy smiles and cheery high fives we receive every day as our children enter through our doors, we must be doing something right!

Despite the challenges of drought, building projects and other unforeseen challenges which may occur, the smiling faces, laughter in the playground and positive engagement in the classroom, tells the story of a happy school. What a privilege we have, as children and adults, to be part of this community. Pippa Sinclair - Principal Sunningdale Prep

### **Book Sales**

Blouberg

19 & 20 March The Rural Child Foundation

22 & 23 March The Book People

Sunningdale

19 & 20 March The Book People

22 & 23 March Rural Child Foundation

### **Outreach**

Make a difference in a child's life by helping them learn to read! Rogz Academy Books and Beyond NPO are looking for volunteers for our English Literacy Programme at Sophakama Primary School in Dunoon. Sessions are on a Tuesday and a Thursday from 12h15–14h00, every week during the school term. Volunteers should have complete proficiency in English; be keen to work with children; and be able to attend sessions regularly and punctually. Training and resources are provided. Please contact Tracy Farquhar (Cell: 082 572 1322) if you are interested or visit <http://www.rogz.com/rogz-academy-books-and-beyond/> for more information.



## Friendship Day 14 February

At Elkanah House, we focus strongly on developing social skills and equipping our children with the tools to get along with their peers. Skills such as being able to effectively communicate, collaborate, connect and build lasting relationships are not only vital life skills but also essential for a balanced and happy life.

We use 14 February as an opportunity to celebrate friendship and we call it Friendship Day. This year, 14 February is next Wednesday. The children are encouraged to wear civvies on that day and can dress in red/pink or white clothing. (Remember that Wednesday is also class PhysEd so their clothing needs to be suitable for active fun.) In order to highlight the significance of this day, our teachers have planned some inspiring activities around friendship for the day.



## Brain Buster

What has to be broken before you can use it?

Last weeks answer:  
Second place.

Please place your answer with your name, surname and class in the postbox in the Pre-primary foyer by Tuesday morning.

A poster for Elkanah House Schoolyard Community Events. The background shows a schoolyard with a blue sky, a sun, and colorful bunting. The text is arranged in a list format, with months in bold and dates and activities in a regular font.

ELKANAH HOUSE	
SCHOOLYARD Community Events	
<b>MARCH</b>	
16 March	- Chilled Vibes (music evening)
<b>MAY</b>	
17& 18 May	- Whose song is it anyway? (quiz night)
<b>AUGUST</b>	
25, 27-31 August	- So you think you can Elkanah? (dance event)
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	
1 September	- So you think you can Elkanah FINAL
14 September	- Flavours of the flag (food festival)
<b>NOVEMBER</b>	
3 November	- Art on the Avenue (art exhibition & market)
<b>DECEMBER</b>	
30 November	- Christmas and Carols Market





ELKANAH HOUSE



# how to guide

School **WhatsApp** groups are a great way to assist with our busy, oversubscribed schedules if they are used effectively and respect is shown to all participants in the group in terms of the content it is used for.

Follow this simple *how to guide* to keep it relevant

## the how to

- Initial communication to arrange events/assistance only
- Share information relevant to the group not shared by other communication/teachers
- Notify parents of school outing/sport cancellations when nothing received by the school
- Take any additional questions/ comments offline
- Send a message directly to the Group Admin to add anybody

## what not to do

- A question/reminder about something covered already causes interruptions to a few people, be considerate
- Don't use the group to catch up on general news from other parents
- Don't respond to initial messages with a thank you or comment
- Please do not send reminders about the colour of shoes, socks and daily admin which has been communicated
- This is a communication tool and not a platform to be used for "loose" updates as we do on Facebook and Twitter

