

Dear Parents

My thanks to those who were able to make the presentation last week. This letter outlines what was covered and helps to remind those who were there of what was covered and, more importantly, gives those who could not be there, an idea of what was spoken about. The PowerPoint presentation is available at <http://college.bishops.org.za/epic/Documents.aspx> .

Angus Longmore spoke superbly. Our intention in getting one of last year's group to talk is to allow parents to see that 'all will be well'! Angus, like those who have gone before him, survived Epic and found it to be great fun and a hugely rewarding experience. I hope you found that encouraging. In addition to this, the DVD of last year's Epic gave a great idea of what it is we try to do.

The College Webpage has Epic under the heading of Pastoral and if you click on Documents you will find what you need. Please note that when the page is updated we also update the Epic blog (<http://bishopsepic.blogspot.com/>). If you subscribe to the blog, you get an email notification whenever there is an update.

For the benefit of those who were not able to make it, I promised that I would fill in some info from the talk.

- The meeting was the only time we get parents together to talk about Epic. From now on, the information is passed on to the boys and contact with parents is by email and internet. One of the things we are encouraging through Epic is the taking on of responsibility, ownership etc. and if we do not empower the boys in this way, they will not learn things like consequences of their actions. If your son therefore tells you that they have not been told something...best you look up on the internet for the other version of the truth!
- Please look at the presentation and see the dates that are mentioned:
 - 12 November for the Blessing of Boots Service
 - 14 November for the start of Epic and 29 November for the end
 - 28 and 29 November for son's last night with dad (or significant paternal figure) and breakfast with whole grade in Citrusdal
- Phil Court spoke on the Epic as a 'Rite of Passage' – a means whereby your son journeys from boyhood into manhood. We see the Blessing of Boots service as a way of handing your son over to those who are going to look after him and then the father (or other significant paternal figure) fetching him from Epic and bringing him home as a 'man'. For this reason, we emphasise the letter from the father or paternal figure which your son will read when he does his 24 hour solo and the importance of the father/paternal figure being there for the last night. Our experience is that there are very few boys who do not have someone there for them and it is always good to see the extra effort to which a number go – some even fly in from overseas!
- Phil also mentioned that we do not want to see parents in the Cederberg until the dads come through for the last night. This is your son's time away from home and the idea is to have no contact either with him or with any of the staff who are doing duty whilst on Epic. Please respect that.
- Whilst every effort is made to minimise injury, the Epic does come with risks. If you look at the presentation, you will see that we have a comprehensive system in place to deal with

emergencies. In addition, a good number of staff have done a first aid course and all your boys will be doing a two day course in the week before Epic. We operate through WildMedix, the company employed by Bishops for Epic. <http://www.wildmedix.com/>

- During the LO lessons of term 4, boys are split into their groups of 25/26 and cycle round to the LO staff to deal with a range of topics. We also have one lesson a week where they all get together and talks on packing bags, snakes, fire safety etc are given.
- It was so good being able to welcome Chris de Bruyn from Hi-Tec. The message was very clear – look after your feet. He was at pains to point out that you can buy as much fancy equipment as you want, but the one thing you must do properly, are the boots your son will wear. We will be arranging that Chris does a similar presentation to the boys early in term 3 and our hope is that all boys will have their boots walked in well before the start of Epic. In previous years there was a direct correlation between ankle injuries and those who were wearing shoes (particularly trail shoes) in place of proper above ankle height boots. We have had far fewer injuries of this nature since we've made the wearing of boots compulsory and believe it was because of our pressure on boys to buy boots and not trail shoes. We'll do the same again this year. A 20% discount voucher was handed out on the night. Phil Court will have these next term if any of you wish to make purchases. The voucher is valid at their shop at Access Park. The V-Lite Flash Hike retails at R2599 (it will cost you R2000 with discount) and the Altitude Ox retails at R2199 (it will cost you R1700). The Altitude Ultra retails at R1799 (it will cost you R1400) and the Eurotrek III retails at R1399 (it will cost you R1100)
- Epic is a 16 day experience and we need to stress that boys are expected to be there for the full time. It impacts hugely on the group that your son is in if he leaves at some stage during Epic. Please discuss this with me if you think this might be a problem.

I do hope that this goes some way in helping you to orientate yourself with respect to the Epic? Please enjoy this time of preparation with your son. It is such a wonderful adventure and now that we are in our eleventh year of running it, it has gained a momentum all of its own, along with 'legend' stories and the like.

Please feel free to email me with questions. If there is anything of a more serious nature that needs to be discussed, we can easily set up a time to chat with all the right people in place. Note that I will be on long leave in term 2 – Phil Court will handle Epic queries.

We make three 'begging' requests to parents every year: One is for use of a 4x4 vehicle – I'm pleased to say that we've already had a family offering us use of their Land Cruiser. The second is for a ski boat to be used at the Waterbase. One of the favourite activities which we have on offer is waterskiing and wakeboarding, where all the boys have an opportunity to try these out when they visit the Waterbase. We have been very fortunate over the past nine years in that parents have been able to lend us boats (in the first year of Epic we made another plan). The three staff members involved in running the Waterbase are Mrs Sally Bowes, Mr Joc Wrench and Mr Angus Firth – all three seasoned boaters and skiers with the necessary certification - and will guarantee to take excellent care of your boat. The school has bought a fixed hull boat so we are in need of a medium sized semi-rigid duck of around 17 to 19 foot. We have all the necessary skis and lifejackets. Linked to this is the cost of petrol for these boats and if any parent has a contact we could use, it would be much appreciated. Please contact me if you can help with any of these requests.

The third request is for help with the collection of and sorting of recyclable materials that can be used for craft work in the schools we work in as part of our service to the community. It goes a bit further than this as we know we need to make a number of purchases of craft materials too. Trudy Hoefnagels will be in touch some time in term 3 to start this rolling, but in the meantime, please give some thought to helping out and contact me if you are willing.

We are of the belief that all boys can do Epic – for some it is going to be tough and probably tough on the family as well. I can only encourage you to believe in the journey we take your sons on. We know that some are not fit enough and we know that some are completely out of condition due to being overweight and, as a result, not being fit enough. We are here to help and if guidance on these or any other issues is required, please be in touch sooner than later.

Kind regards

Graham