

Dear Grade 10 Parents

There are two main reasons for writing and I'll follow these with other bits of information that I know will assist the process of preparation for Epic at the end of the year.

It has become a tradition for us to arrange a practice hike for the Grade 10's in the last week of this term. The last exam for Grade 10's is written on Friday 22 September. On Tuesday and Wednesday (Monday is a public holiday) boys get their scripts back and on Thursday 28 September (the day before term ends) all Grade 10's are going on the hike. Details will be given closer to the time but most important of all is that boys wear the boots they will wear on Epic. Please ensure your son has his in time. They will leave at 7.15 am, either walking to the mountain or being taken to their starting point. We will return by 1 pm. Boys will walk in their groups (Wolfberg, Sneeuberg, Tafelberg, Apex or Krakadouw – named after the peaks the respective group climbs when on their staff hike). These groups will be made available on Tuesday 26 September. I'm sure you will agree that this will be a great team building exercise and will also allow boys to see how fit or unfit they are for walking.

The second main reason for writing is to ask for help. At two of the bases we use, boys are involved in community work at the local schools in the area. The school at Jamaka is small (with just 32 children) and the one at Elizabethfontein is a thriving one of 200 Primary school children near Bushmanskloof in the north of the Cederberg. Depending on where your son is for his community base (and one group will do this twice) he will be involved in craft work with the children. For the past five years parents have prepared this material. We're not yet looking for the goods that will be put together but rather the team who are prepared to do this. If you are interested in helping, please email me. It is great fun and I know the children and staff at these schools look forward to your sons' stage managing this exciting part of what we do. Once we've got the team together, we'll send out a wish list.

The past two years has seen us receiving large donations of towels and linen which we were able to use most effectively – in fact a large proportion of it was sold (with permission from the donors) to go towards the costs of the craft work and other community work the Grade 10s do at the schools. Last year, for example, we erected the old Pre-Prep jungle gyms at Grootkloof Primary (the school near Jamaka). I'll be visiting these schools this weekend and will be drawing up a 'wish list' which I promise to share with our parents.

Please remember to buy the cards which were done by Michael Beckurts – they are available at the School Shop until the end of this month. Funds from the sale of these cards go to Elizabethfontein Primary.

Now for the other 'bits and pieces':

**Dates to diarise:**

**Practice hike 1** – Thursday 28 September

**Epic Seminar** – Monday 6 to Friday 10 November (no lessons, but boys involved in a wide array of activities during the school day including a first aid course, bag check, practice hike #2 and lots more! Please try your best to avoid doctors' appointments, embassy visits etc that week.)

**Blessing of Boots** – Sunday 12 November

**Epic** is from Tuesday 14 November to Wednesday 29 November

**Last night for dads** – Tuesday 28 November to the morning of Wednesday 29 November

**Staff Hike**

A group of staff will be going on a practice hike this coming weekend. It is vital we check out some of our routes and be open to starting up new ones – particularly this year where we might not be allowed to hike in a large part of where we have always hiked. Safety is king and we spend a large amount of time improving what we do and responding to previous experiences. I'll be doing a tour of the bases and schools we work at on Friday and Saturday and will also visit Spar in Clanwilliam, to ensure that everything is in place for the arrival of 123 boys and a total of 80 staff on 14 November!

You can find copies of previous letters, documents relating to Epic as well as other details on our website: <http://college.bishops.org.za/epic/default.aspx>.

Please feel free to contact me if there are any queries – there is no point in worrying about something if it can be sorted out with a quick email, a chat on the phone or even a meeting. This Epic must work well for you and your son. The only area where there is no room for manoeuvre is in the group selection – your son has had the option to pair up with someone so they can be in the same group and, with a few exceptions based on input from house directors, we ensure this happens. From there the groups are completely random and as much effort is made to spread out the houses and abilities and generally mix up things as much as possible. Once the list is published on Tuesday 26 September, it is final and we ask you and your sons to respect that.

Kind regards

Graham