

Dear Parents

As I have mentioned before, each Thursday sees us meeting with the Grade 10 group to discuss Epic. Last Thursday served as an introduction to Epic. The meeting gave the boys the opportunity to see pictures from last year and to start focussing on some of the major aspects of the Epic.

I showed them pictures of where each base is, what we do at each base and gave them an idea of the sort of programme that they will be following over the 16 days. I also explained what we will be doing during the coming term – both in the LO lessons and then with me during Civics. We touched on topics such as:

- **Cycling** – be fit; cycling gloves are a good idea; wear the boots you walk in – if special shoes (or even tackies) for cycling are brought, they need to be carried and carrying excess weight is a bad idea.
- **Food** – The next meeting will deal specifically with food for hikes and the solo. All other food is given to them at the bases. A special plan is made for those requiring Halaal food and any others with other special dietary requirements – boys in this position must make contact with me.
- **Overweight baggage** – two reasons for this. Too much food packed or too many clothes. The Clothing and equipment list can be found at <http://college.bishops.org.za/epic/Documents.aspx>.
- **Boots** – boots can be worn to school this term; the only way to minimise the onset of blisters is by walking the boots in on the mountains ie going uphill and downhill preferably with a pack on the back – keeping on the flat is all good and well but does little in toughening up the feet for long days in hot and sweaty socks.
- **Community concerns** – we spoke of the two schools we do work in and how in a couple of subject areas, boys will be preparing for the role they play in facilitating the experience.
- **Past problems** – some of the issues we address in the coming weeks that have the potential to spoil the Epic experience were mentioned. These include mental attitude, following the correct routes, graffiti and litter, blisters, personal hygiene and dehydration.
- **Safety** – we trust the boys to do the ‘right thing’. We go to enormous lengths to prepare the boys and to communicate with you so that you too can emphasise the need to do the ‘right thing’. Accidents happen, people do get sick and fires can start but if they do so through inappropriate behaviour or self-infliction, then the boys not only put their own lives at risk and those of the members of their group but also those of us (including emergency services) who need to be called out to manage the situation. As you are aware, you’ve been asked to update your personal records – there is nothing worse than finding a phone number is incorrect and we need to get hold of you. Please ensure that this info plus the info regarding things such as allergies is 100% correct and up to date. The legal opinion we’ve taken over the years has indicated that an indemnity form is not worth the paper on which it is written – no one can get you to sign away any rights you or your children have. To this end, I’ve copied at the end of the letter, the wording we’ve used in the past for a consent form we got parents to sign. Unless our insurers tell us otherwise, we’re using the principle of tacit consent – with all the information that is sent out to you and the fact that Epic fees have been paid it would be surprising if a parent were not to have known what his son is going to be involved in. For this reason, no signatures will be required.

- **LO rotation** – your sons started this during LO this past week. Topics such as Solo & Itinerary; Fitness & Hydration; Hiking & Map work; Personal leadership and group dynamics and Packing your bag will be covered.
- **In the next few weeks** we talk about food, have a snake show and interview some of the Grade 11's.

A reminder of dates:

- Last academic day is Friday 3 November
- Monday 6 November – Letter from dad/father figure (details on the website)
- Monday 6 November to Friday 10 November – A two day Epic Seminar followed by a two day First Aid course and a practice hike and bag check. (Details to follow)
- Sunday 12 November at 6.30 pm – Blessing of Boots Service
- Monday 13 November – a free day unless the bag check registered a 'fail'!
- Tuesday 14 November – depart for Epic (meet at the Astro at 5.30 am)
- Tuesday 28 November to Wednesday 29 November – Dads/father figure join sons for the last night.
- Wednesday 29 November – Last day of Epic

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>.

I want to remind you of the various deals that are on offer to you. Hi-Tec with their 20% off from their Access Park shop (I still have some of these vouchers left over – ask your son to see me). Outdoor Warehouse with their 10% off (see the documents page on the website).

Kind regards

Graham

As parent / guardian you acknowledge that your son / ward is going to be part of a 16 day adventure with fellow students under the control and guidance of College staff and others either contracted for the Epic or volunteering their services. The Epic makes use of the tool of outdoor adventure to facilitate its objectives. All role players (parents, students, staff, helpers) therefore need to accept that there are inherent risks whether activities are guided / facilitated or not. It is incumbent on your son / ward to act responsibly at all times, thereby ensuring his own safety and that of those around him. Please discuss this with your son / ward as we do from the College side in our various meetings to prepare the boys adequately.