

COLLEGE

12 SEPTEMBER 2025





FROM THE HEAD'S DESK...

Dear Parents

I trust the start of the third term has been a positive start as we get into the rhythm of a new term. The September camp is done and dusted, and it is always so wonderful to see our pupils arrive back at school with a real sense of fulfilment and achievement. These camps are so important in developing, not only grit and determination, but a love of the outdoors and a real sense of camaraderie. They are about character building and self-discovery.

Reflecting on the last term through the course of the break, I kept coming back to the notion of the difference between the Real World and the Ideal World and how that contrast plays out in our daily lives, especially as parents and educators.

The Real World is often messy, unpredictable, and full of challenges, and that is a good thing! It's where plans change, expectations shift, and we learn to adapt. The Ideal World, on the other hand, is filled with dreams, goals, and high hopes, a place where everything goes smoothly and everyone thrives, and that is a good thing. The Ideal world is inspiring... but not always within reach, especially in everyday life!

As a parent who spends many hours at work (school), I've had many "ideal world" moments, those times when I wished I could attend every school event, match, or performance, but life's responsibilities got in the way. I know many of you understand that tension between what we hope for and what reality allows.

Our teachers also navigate that space between real and ideal. Of course, they'd love every child to achieve top marks and excel in every area. However, the reality is that each student is unique, with their own strengths, challenges, and personal journey. That's not just okay, it's something we must always celebrate.

We all want the best for our children, whether it's academic achievement, sporting success, or creative expression. Some students do tick multiple boxes, and we applaud that, but many others shine in quieter ways, at their own pace, and through their own struggles. Not every match is a win. Not every term ends with awards. Yet often, the most meaningful growth happens in the tough times, not the easy ones.

As the Head of our school, I arrive each day with a vision of what the "perfect" school could be, but just like the adolescents in our care, our school has its highs and lows.





FROM THE HEAD'S DESK...

Continued...

It's in those more challenging moments that some of the most important lessons take root for all of us.

Our children will stumble. They'll make mistakes, some bigger than others! That's part of growing up. What matters most is how we, the adults in the room, support them through it, giving them space to reflect, learn, and try again. That's where the partnership between home and school becomes so vital.

There's an old African proverb: It takes a village to raise a child. At Woodridge, we live that truth. Raising and educating young people is a shared journey between teachers, parents, guardians, mentors, and role models. Yes, we love to see the awards and badges. But what truly matters is the kind of human beings our children are becoming.

Our undertaking is simple but powerful: to help shape good people, respectful, kind, resilient individuals who grow into adults of significance. That takes all of us, working together, day in and day out.

Thank you for walking this road with us in both the Real World and the Ideal World. May we continue to be a cohesive community, helping our children grow into the best versions of themselves.

Warm regards,

Luke Hartley

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

Philippians 4:8



Walking the tough-love tightrope of Term 3.

Leah ter Bruggen – Educational Psychologist

We are closer to the end of 2025 than we are to the beginning of it. How does that settle with you? We're 11 Fridays away from the end of the school year. Ready for another one? Our Matrics are already busy with their trial exams!

As the year steams ahead, Mr Hartley's "Taking Responsibility" theme can either haunt or hold you as you brace for final acceleration. Where is this year going you might ask? Well that IS the question. Within it, a number of ways it finds meaning in the lives of parents and students alike. Is the year flying because you've been so focused on your goals you haven't noticed? Is time flying because you've just realized you or your child are running out of time to make changes or reach goals? Or perhaps, you're not quite sure what this year is turning into because you haven't given much thought as to how to make the most of the time afforded to you?

As you contemplate your role as parent in this final sprint, perhaps take a moment to notice your gut reaction - Did your thoughts morph into the commands of a colonel? Did you immediately want to grab your child's diary and see which assignment you could just do for them? Did you suddenly wonder if your child will manage to endure the pressure? Or did you perhaps shrug because you thought "we've got this"?

Often times, when the going gets tough and the pressure mounts, we may respond in extremes. Parenting a teenager, and being the teenager, are no different. Taking responsibility can swing to extremes too—pushing our teen without pausing for love, or loving them so much, we don't consider their need to be tough. As our articles this year suggest, a balance of both is necessary for helping your teen thrive through the academic pressures of the final term, and come out more resilient, skilled and self-confident.

Nevitt Sanford's "Theory of Student Development", states that for an individual to grow and develop, they need a balanced environment with both challenges to push them beyond their comfort zones and support to provide guidance and resources. Too much challenge without support leads to anxiety and frustration, while too much support without challenge leads to boredom and disengagement. The optimal balance fosters vital engagement and personal maturation.

As you walk the tightrope of Term 3 with your teen, let's have a look at ways you can balance some of the tension inherent in "tough love" in a way that can create structure to nurture success and improvement, while providing the love they need to come out emotionally and mentally sound.

Organisation and Planning

Tough:

Teens need routines, deadlines, and clear expectations — especially in the last stretch of the school year. Structuring their time will teach your teen how to manage multiple responsibilities, along with the concepts of prioritising and time limits.

- **Routine** (same daily sequence of events): Predictability and consistency promote emotional and functional resilience and independence.
- **Boundaries/rules/limits** : behaviour that will or will not be tolerated (including pre-determined consequences) - this includes putting limits on distracting habits or helping your high achiever learn when to put the books down for the day. Add phone-time into a schedule or create phone-free zones to manage their use.
- **Strategies** such as phone reminders, checklist charts for the day or diarised reminders
- **Calendar/Study plan**
Encourage your teen to allocate sufficient time to studying on a regular basis to avoid anxiety caused by running out of time to study (cramming)
- Block out fixed commitments such as classes, school hours, extra mural activities, and personal obligations.
- Schedule study sessions for each

subject or assignment. Allocate more time for challenging subjects or assignments that require deeper concentration.

- Divide larger projects or assignments into smaller, actionable tasks over multiple study sessions to avoid last-minute rushes and ensure steady progress.

Love:

- Encourage your teen to schedule breaks, meals, exercise, and relaxation periods into their study calendar to maintain a healthy balance.
- Are you available and/or approachable to support your teen and hold them accountable to their schedules and plans?
- How ready are you to hand over control, providing appropriate guidance but allowing your teen to learn from their own failures and consequences?
- What example do you set with your daily structure, organizing and planning?

Health in your routine:

Tough:

Sleep (SA Sleep Lab)

- Teens should be getting between 8 and 10 hours of sleep.
- Sleep is needed in order to refine new skills recall (muscle memory)
- Sleep prior to learning is needed to absorb new fact memories. Sleep after learning is needed to retain new fact memories. Missing sleep before learning decreases ability to absorb new facts by > 20%. Missing sleep after learning decreases ability to retain new facts by 20-40%.
- Enhances concentration and memory
- Makes you happier, less depressed and less anxious
- Makes you more creative
- Under slept people eat 30-40% more Sugar (Sweets), Carbohydrates (Bread / Pasta) & Salty snacks.
- Your immune system weakens with less sleep.

Hydration (British Nutrition Foundation):

- Water makes up over half our bodyweight - fluids are essential



- Dehydration can make your teen feel tired, get headaches and lead to poor concentration.
- Teens need about 6-8 cups or glasses of fluid a day – more if it is hot or if we are physically active.
- Try to avoid drinks that are high in sugar.
- Fluid intake is important to maintain hydration when physically active and is advised before, during and after activity. If active at higher levels for long periods (such as intense activity lasting more than 1 hour), drinks with added carbohydrate and electrolytes may be advisable to rehydrate more quickly and replace electrolytes lost in sweat.

Diet (*The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne*)

- Doctors and dietitians do not usually suggest that teens count calories. Instead, your teen should focus on eating a mix of foods from all five food groups.
- Your teen should eat minimally processed and as much unprocessed food as possible. Processing can remove nutrients like fibre, water, vitamins and minerals, and add things like salt and sugar.
- Crash diets, fad diets and fasting are also not recommended for teens.
- Eat healthy foods that boost brain function—high sugar snacks can spike concentration and then cause a sudden drop in focus.

Activity and exercise (*Australian Department of Health, Disability and Aging*)

- Teens should achieve the recommended balance of high levels of physical activity, low levels of sedentary behaviour, and sufficient sleep each day.
- Accumulate 60 mins or more of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day.
- Several hours of a variety of light physical activities
- Exercise builds their heart and lung fitness, strengthens their bones and muscles, promotes quality sleep and helps them develop key brain functions like concentration.
- All physical activity can help reduce stress and positively impact mental health and wellbeing.

Weekends and Recreation

- Leisure time aids the development of creativity and confidence
- It supports their ability to deal with stress and anxiety
- It allows time to foster connection with friends and loved ones - this helps put life's difficulties in perspective.
- Not all leisure time is equal - Encourage your teen to reduce sedentary activities (TV, scrolling, gaming) and explore more cultural, musical, or sporting skill development.

Love

- Time to relax, including activities that allow us to move or have fun are important for bringing balance into our routine and helping our bodies produce "happy hormones" to defend our bodies against our "stress hormones".
- Avoid setting strict rules about the foods your teen can or cannot eat. It is best to be flexible day-to-day. Even processed foods like chocolate and chips can be part of a balanced diet if your teen eats them in moderation.
- It is important for teens to stay active, but working too hard can take a toll on the body. If your teen does competitive sports or high-intensity training, they should take regular days off so their muscles can repair.
- It can be tricky to motivate teens – especially if they do not want to do something. Instead of forcing your teen to exercise in a certain way or play particular sports, focus on what they enjoy. Consider taking a walk with them as a way to get them active while enjoying some catch-up time together.
- What example do you set with your discipline, habits, and routine?

Devices and distraction

Tough

When screentime is used for the main purpose of entertainment, it can become a tool that provides all the pleasure and distraction, without nurturing self-control or discipline to be able to balance our online habits and other daily responsibilities, like school.

- Excessive screen time has been

linked to various health issues, including anxiety, depression, poor sleep, and decreased physical activity.

- Set limits and rules for times and duration of screen time—this includes TV, phones and computers (if not for school work).
- Calming spaces and well organised environments help regulate senses, which keeps our bodies more relaxed and increases our ability to focus. Reduce distraction!
- *The Pomodoro Technique*
Breaking learning/studies into chunks (segments) with breaks in between actually helps you to concentrate for longer and be more productive.

If your teen struggles with:

- Focusing for too long
- Gets bored easily
- Feels the need to move around a lot

then they could try: Work for 25 mins, break for 5 mins. Repeat for 4 rounds and then have a longer break (30 mins).

Love

Distraction or difficulty concentrating can be a sign of stress or overwhelm in teens. Supporting their ability to regulate their moods and emotions requires both practical skill and good modelling from parents.

- Talk about emotions—even the awkward ones. It's normal to feel anxious, tired, or frustrated right now. Naming those feelings in a safe space helps them pass.
- Mindfulness skills—eg: breathing, creating, dancing, playing with the dog, and stretching habits to calm negative moods and release tension.
- Teach, model, and coach self-regulation skills (e.g., goal setting, problem solving, stress management). Provide opportunities for practice, along with opportunities for reflection.
- Use positive reinforcement (i.e., praise and support) to encourage desired behaviors.

Want to get hold of us? Find us at:

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In a recent assembly, we recognised academic excellence and diligence for Term 2. In the first category, the Top 10 in every grade, students were called in alphabetical order to keep the surprise for Prize Giving later in the term. Congratulations to these individuals for always setting the bar high and working hard to achieve their goals.

Congratulations!

TOP 10 (ALPHABETICALLY) IN EACH GRADE, TERM 2 2025

Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Lily-Rose Ferrant Quinn Foreman Xinyu Luo Amelie Meara Tau Moloi Buhle Ngweba Amy Seymour Simliziwe Swayena Lumae van der Berg Danté Williams	Ava Chantson Luca Hamlet Marcus jansen van Vuuren Iminathi Mashelele Connor Meara Olivia Montagna Sange Nogqala Leah Owen Hannah Potgieter Gaby Web	Lawrence Chang Luke Chantson Britt Degoumois Kate Herselman Ella Leshem Francois Nel Daniel Potgieter Rebecca Stottelaar Sasha Stottelaar Harry Thompson	Morgan Ackerman Daniel Darlow Siân Dearmer Michael Gothard Vasa Horak Maria King Salizwa Masoka Gian Moolman Alexa O'riain Sienna Peens	Dimitri Alexandris Rebecca Botha Tamsin De Villiers Conor Gallagher Jade Kelly Georgia Kilfoil Alexander Moolman Daniella Smith Sandra Smith Dané Strydom

MOST IMPROVED PUPILS – TERM 1 COMPARED TO TERM 2 2025

Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Madison Klinkert Xinyu Luo Kubechosi Molakeng Buhle Ngweba William Quinn Sydney Stiemie Alexa Thornton Lumae van der Berg Danté Williams	Ben Ackerman Jack Feltham Luca Hamlet Isla Kelly Tristan Kretzmann Tandolwethu Ludidi Connor Meara Lwanda Nkomana Malachi Smith Sinda Sneli Stephen Swanepoel	William Faifer Shawn Young Kee-Lynn Armoed Elan Scott Sonwabise Gotyana Jasper Truman-Baker Thato Norton Suiram van Heerden Kate Herselman Adam Prins Iviwe Ngangelizwe Bukho Resha Unethemba Melitafa	Christian Chandler Jac Duval Ava Gerber Daniella Marcus Alexa O'riain Sienna Peens Kyra Pledger Connor Von Der Marwitz Cameron Whitehouse	Daniel May Thato Mbangula Amara Ngunga James Saunders Ryan Steenkamp



BLOOD DONOR CLINIC



We recently hosted a successful blood donation drive, where pupils and staff came together to contribute a total of 29 units of blood.

This sound effort, given the fact that the matrics were writing exams, reflects the school's strong commitment to community service and social responsibility.

Blood donation is a vital act of kindness that has a direct impact—each unit has the potential to save up to three lives. By participating in this initiative, the Woodridge community has played an important role in supporting the healthcare system and helping those in urgent medical need.

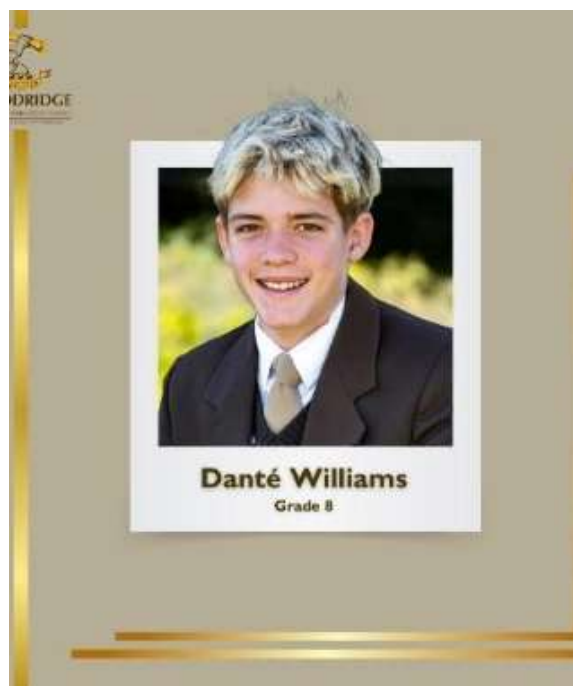
Their collective contribution is not only commendable but also life-changing for recipients across the region.

BOARDING

This past weekend Mr Leshem and a group of boarders took it upon themselves to enjoy a game of paintball on campus. This was a wonderful opportunity for the boarders to interact with our new House Parent, Mr Leshem, as well as have some good old-fashioned fun. These activities are so important in building solid relationships between staff and pupils.



SWIMMING



Through the course of the August holiday, Danté Williams participated in the Harlequins Short Course Gala in East London and in the Madibaz Gala in Gqeberha.

In the Short Course Gala he achieved 2 gold medals, 4 silver medals, and a bronze medal. In the Madibaz Gala, he achieved bronze medals in both the 50m backstroke and the 100m backstroke events.

These achievements are a result of consistent hard work and determination, a testament to his commitment to excellence.

The first ever Blue Abyss St Francis Bay River Mile was held recently on the Kromme River. Our College students once again excelled in winning both the Open Male and Female events.

Vaclav Horak won the open race for males, with Jessica Harcus winning the female race. This is a commendable achievement and a result of consistent training.

We congratulate both Vaclav and Jessica on a great performance!



SURF LIFESAVING



For the second time Vaclav Horak represented the Czech National Junior Lifesaving Team at the recent European Championships held in Poland.

The pool events were held in Szczecin, and the surf events at Miedzydroje. In the team events, Vaclav was part of the Czech team that came 4th in the SERC and 4x25 Manikin Relay events, 6th in the Beach sprint, 7th in the Ironman Relay, and 4x50m Obstacle Relay events, and 8th in the Mixed Ironman Relay.

In the individual results, Vaclav managed a very creditable 7th in the 100m Manikin Tow with Fins and Malibu Board events and 11th in the Ironman event. This is the culmination of a disciplined and persistent approach to the sport.

Vaclav is commended on his efforts!

WATER POLO

In the first water polo games of the season, the boys' 1st team had a very good start with good wins over Kingswood (12-3) and Glenwood House (5-4), narrowly going down to St Andrews College (4-7). This was a promising start and showed that preseason preparation goes a long way to creating a successful start to a season.

The 1st team girls struggled against Kingswood but never gave up and played to the end, giving it their all. The 2nd team girls also struggled against Kingswood and DSG, but they worked hard and used this as a learning experience.



BODY BUILDING



Thato Norton (second from the far left in the photo) participated in his first-ever bodybuilding competition this past weekend in Gqeberha at the PCA Eastern Cape Show. Thato managed a very creditable 4th position – a deserved result after much hard work and attention to detail.

We look forward to monitoring his progress as he grows in the sport.

CHESS



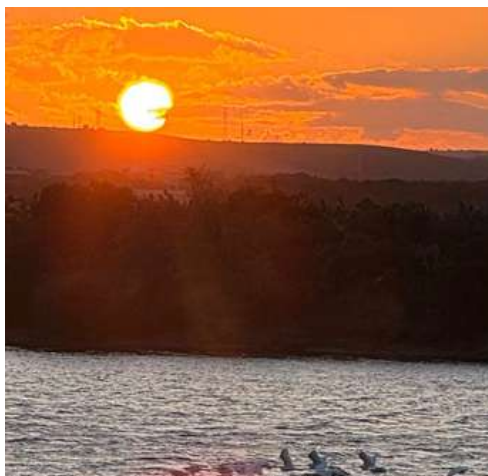
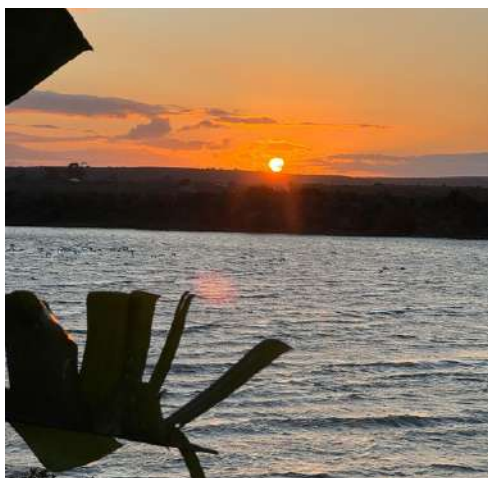
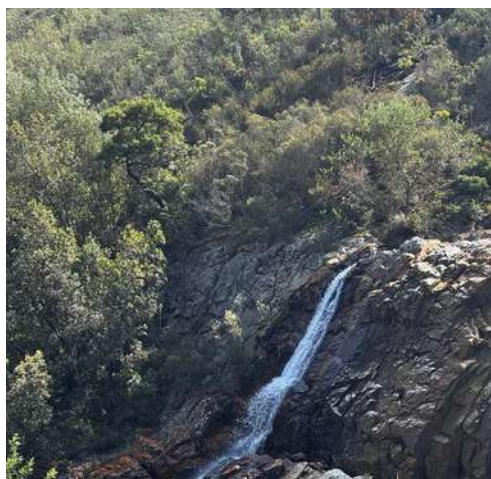
This past weekend, Deacon Dugmore participated in the Eastern Cape Closed Chess Tournament.

Just under 500 Chess players qualified to participate in the Tournament. For this Tournament, Deacon was initially ranked 8th of the 41 qualifiers in the U16 division and managed to finish 6th – an outstanding effort in a fiercely competitive tournament.

Deacon will now compete for the EP A Team in the National Tournament in December later this year.



GRADE CAMPS



This past week, our Grade 8 to 11 students had the wonderful opportunity to step outside the classroom and immerse themselves in nature, while also strengthening bonds with their peers. These camps are a vital part of a student's journey at Woodridge College, encouraging personal growth through teamwork, self-awareness, and the development of leadership skills.

Camps play a key role in helping students become more independent, confident, and adaptable. When the groups returned to school on Friday, there was a clear sense of accomplishment and camaraderie. These shared experiences break down social barriers and help foster a more inclusive and connected school community. Being outside of the traditional school setting also allows students to develop a deeper appreciation for the world around them.

School camps remain an essential element of our curriculum, offering meaningful experiences that contribute to the development of well-rounded, grounded individuals – the very hallmark of a Woodridge student. A heartfelt thank you to all the staff who made these camps possible, and congratulations to our students for embracing the experience and stepping up to grow as individuals.



GRADE 8 ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY



GRADE 9 EXPEDITION CAMP



GRADE 10 CYCLING AND KAYAKING SKILLS CAMP



GRADE 11 LEADERSHIP CAMP



DATES TO DIARISE

-  Tuesday: 16 September Grade 8 Study Skills
-  Thursday: 18 September Grade 9 Study Skills
-  Wednesday: 01 October, Grade 9 Market Day
-  Monday: 06 October, Prize Giving
-  Thursday: 09 October, Valedictory Service
-  Thursday: 09 October to Sunday 12 October, Stayers Water Polo Tournament
-  [Click here for the College Monthly Planner](#) ***Subject to change***



Post Camp Advice

- Kindly remember to air dry your tents
- Check that your tent kit is complete with all its bits and bobs.
- Two-way radios and 1st Aid kits to be handed in at OE.



Embracing the Ideal of Leadership

Leadership

Leadership recognises that successful leaders are driven by a desire to be of service to others and to nurture, guide, develop and help them to improve and succeed.

