College News

26 June, 2026

1936 - 2026

WOODRIDGE PREPARATORY

celebrating 90 years

Dear Parents

As we arrive at the half-term break, it is hard to believe how quickly the past nine weeks have passed. It feels as though we were only recently welcoming pupils back to school, full of anticipation for the term ahead. Yet, in what seems like the blink of an eye, we find ourselves at the midpoint of the term, reflecting on a period that has been filled with learning, growth, achievement, challenge, and opportunity.

There is much for which we can be grateful. Every day, we have the privilege of witnessing the young people in our care continue their journey of adolescence, developing in confidence, character, and capability. Whether in the classroom, on the sports field, on the stage, in service to others, or through the countless interactions that shape school life, our pupils continue to demonstrate resilience, enthusiasm, and a willingness to embrace new experiences.

As another winter sports season draws to a close, we have much to reflect upon and celebrate. Across our hockey, rugby, and netball programmes, there have been moments of great success and disappointment. Such is the nature of sport. While victories are always enjoyed, it is often through the challenges, setbacks, and difficult results that some of the most valuable lessons are learned. Sport continues to provide our pupils with opportunities to develop resilience, perseverance, humility, and teamwork, qualities that will serve them well far beyond their school years.

One of the most encouraging aspects of this season has been the spirit and sense of belonging that have been evident throughout the College. Although two of our Derby Days fell victim to poor weather conditions, the enthusiasm and support shown by pupils, staff, and parents remained unwavering. There is something special about the way our community comes together around sport, celebrating not only results but also effort, commitment, and the privilege of representing the College.

A particular highlight was witnessing the entire school gather in a large circle following our fixture against Westering. In that moment, the unity, pride, and connectedness of the Woodridge community were on full display. It served as a powerful reminder that while sport may provide the occasion, it is the relationships, shared experiences, and sense of belonging that leave the most lasting impression.

As we look ahead to the second half of the term, our focus shifts to a season that is uniquely Woodridge – Outdoor Education. OE is woven into the fabric of our College and provides opportunities for pupils to challenge themselves, discover new strengths, and develop a deeper appreciation for the natural environment that surrounds us. It is a season that celebrates participation, adventure, creativity, and teamwork, while allowing pupils to engage in experiences that are distinctly different from those found in a traditional classroom setting.

From the excitement of camp cooking to the much-anticipated challenge of the wall, there truly is something for everyone during OE season. One of the great strengths of Outdoor Education is its ability to provide multiple pathways for pupils to contribute, succeed, and find their place within the community. Whether a pupil is competing, leading, supporting others, or simply stepping beyond their comfort zone, each experience offers valuable opportunities for personal growth and connection.

As a College, we now have the opportunity to build on the strong foundation that has been established during the winter sports season. The spirit, unity, and sense of belonging that we have witnessed over recent months should continue to define our community as we move into this next chapter of the term. Outdoor Education reminds us that every individual brings unique gifts, talents, and perspectives to our school, and our collective responsibility is to ensure that Woodridge remains a place where every pupil feels valued, connected, and able to be authentically themselves. When this happens, not only do individuals thrive, but our entire community is strengthened.

As a community, we have shared many memorable moments over the past nine weeks, and we remain deeply thankful for the support, partnership, and encouragement of our parents as together we guide and nurture the growth of each child.

To conclude, I encourage you to make the most of this half-term break and to enjoy the opportunity to spend quality time with your children. School terms are busy, and these pauses in the calendar provide a valuable opportunity for families to reconnect, recharge, and refresh before the demands of the weeks ahead. As we move into the second half of the term, we do so with much anticipation and optimism. There is also the welcome reminder that we are turning the corner on winter, with the days beginning to grow a little longer and signs of spring slowly appearing on the horizon. We look forward to welcoming our pupils back after the break, refreshed and ready to embrace all that lies ahead in what promises to be an exciting and rewarding few weeks at Woodridge.

Luke Hartley

> “May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears”
>
> – Nelson Mandela

Healthy Positivity: More Than Sunshine

"Nature does not flourish under constant sunshine. Forests need rain, and changing seasons shape the landscape.
People are no different."

—— **Julie Du Toit**

From social media posts and motivational posters to everyday conversations, we are often exposed to messages that encourage us to stay positive, regardless of the situation.

Smile. Shine. Everything is fine.

At first glance, these messages seem uplifting. Sometimes, however, they suggest we should hide difficult feelings rather than acknowledge them. Following a setback, such as failing a test or being cut from a team, learners are often encouraged to focus on positivity, with comments such as, “Just stay positive!” appearing almost immediately. The intention is usually kind, but beneath it sits a quiet message urging us to push aside disappointment, frustration, or sadness as quickly as possible.

Psychologists call this toxic positivity: the pressure to stay upbeat even when life is difficult. While optimism has its place, this kind of positivity encourages people to move past emotions too quickly rather than sit with and work through them.

It is a bit like a hiking trail sign painted over with the words “easy route,” masking the loose rocks, steep climbs, and muddy sections waiting ahead. From a distance, it looks reassuring. In reality, it leaves hikers completely unprepared for the journey.

Just as hikers expect changing terrain on a long trail, learners should expect that some seasons of school life will be more challenging than others. Exams, friendship difficulties, injuries, disappointments, family struggles, and uncertainty are all part of the landscape. Pretending those challenges are not there leaves us no better prepared to navigate them.

Making Space for the Whole Journey

Healthy positivity is not about ignoring reality or forcing a bright outlook. It is about acknowledging what is happening while still holding onto hope. It can look like recognising that an exam has been stressful, but that you have prepared, or acknowledging that a loss in sport is disappointing while still thinking about what you can learn and what comes next. It is a way of facing reality honestly without becoming overwhelmed by it.

By contrast, toxic positivity often appears during times of emotional difficulty, when people are encouraged, directly or indirectly, to replace their genuine feelings with more positive ones. It can appear as rushed reassurance, dismissal of frustration, or pressure to move on before emotions have had space to settle.

Emotions that remain unacknowledged do not vanish over time; rather, they tend to re-emerge, often more intensely and in circumstances where they are harder to regulate.

Navigating Difficult Seasons

During challenging times, healthy positivity involves simple practices that support coping and resilience:

- **Name the storm before searching for its positive aspect.**

Acknowledge what is happening before trying to reframe it.

- **Hold two truths at once.**

A difficult week does not erase everything that is good in your life. Both realities can exist together.

- **Reach for people, not for a performance.**

Putting on a brave face for others is exhausting; a genuine conversation with a friend, parent, teacher, coach, or counsellor is often more helpful and comforting than pretending everything is fine.

- **Break the mountain into smaller steps.**

Exam preparation, sports season, and family challenges become more manageable when tackled one step at a time.

- **Treat rest as part of the journey.**

Recovery is not weakness; it is an essential part of growth and resilience. It creates space for reflection, adaptation, and renewed energy.

- **Growth requires both sunshine and rain**

Nature does not flourish under constant sunshine. Forests need rain and changing seasons shape the landscape. People are no different.

Healthy positivity involves facing difficult weather as well as enjoying clear skies. It allows space for disappointment, frustration, and uncertainty, while still choosing to move forward. Growth does not come from pretending every day is easy, but from learning to walk through different seasons without losing direction.

After all, the most meaningful journeys are rarely the easiest routes.

Is there a challenge you have been resisting that may hold an important lesson or opportunity for growth?

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Sport

Derby vs Westering

Woodridge College enjoyed a memorable and successful Derby Day against Westering, with our pupils displaying tremendous commitment, resilience, and school spirit across the sporting fixtures. While the weather unfortunately forced the cancellation of all netball matches on Friday afternoon, those contests that did take place provided plenty of excitement and showcased the determination that has characterised our winter sports season.

Our hockey teams produced an outstanding set of results, with every Woodridge side securing well-deserved victories. The teams played with confidence and composure, demonstrating the skills and teamwork that have been developed throughout the season. Their success was a fitting reward for the hard work and dedication shown by players and coaches alike.

On the rugby field, there were excellent victories for the U16A, 2nd XV, and 1st XV teams. All three matches were closely contested and played in a positive spirit, reflecting the mutual respect shared between the two schools. The players displayed courage and determination throughout, often having to dig deep in challenging moments to secure their results. Unfortunately, the U14A and U15A teams came up against two very physical teams and went down.

A special mention must go to the 2nd XV, whose performance epitomised the grit and resilience shown by many Woodridge teams on the day. After falling behind, they refused to give in, fighting their way back into the contest before holding off a determined Westering side in a thrilling finish. Their perseverance and belief in one another were rewarded with a memorable victory that will long be remembered by the players.

While the results were pleasing, what stood out most was the character displayed by our pupils. Time and again, Woodridge teams demonstrated resilience under pressure, supported one another wholeheartedly, and represented the College with pride. It was a day that highlighted not only sporting success but also the values that underpin sport at Woodridge—commitment, teamwork, respect, and courage.

We congratulate all our players and coaches on a wonderful day of competition and thank our parents and supporters for their enthusiastic encouragement throughout the fixture. Derby Days are always special occasions, and this year's encounter with Westering will be remembered for the determination, unity, and spirit shown by the Woodridge community.

Derby vs Kingswood

Sport

The Derby Day against Kingswood is always one of the most anticipated fixtures on our sporting calendar, and this year was no different. Facing strong and talented opposition across all age groups, our Woodridge boys' and girls' teams demonstrated tremendous resilience, determination, and character throughout the day.

While not every result went our way, what stood out most was the commitment and effort shown by every player who wore the Woodridge colours. Our teams competed with courage, supported one another, and never stopped fighting, even when challenged by quality opposition.

The matches were played in a wonderful spirit, reflecting the values and traditions of both schools. There was healthy competition, mutual respect, and excellent sportsmanship on display throughout the day, making it a memorable occasion for all involved.

We are incredibly proud of our players for the way they represented Woodridge. Their hard work, perseverance, and positive attitude were evident in every contest and are qualities that extend far beyond the final score. We thank our coaches, staff, parents, and supporters for their encouragement and contribution to another successful Derby Day experience.

> **It was a day that highlighted not only sporting success but also the values that underpin sport at Woodridge - commitment, teamwork, respect, and courage.**

Click here to view the album

Equestrian

"In riding a horse, we borrow freedom."
- Helen Thompson

Woodridge riders recently enjoyed success at the Western Mounted Games Show held in Port Elizabeth, showcasing their skill, determination, and sportsmanship.

Congratulations to Michaela Wedderburn on her promotion from Level 1 to Level 2, a significant achievement that reflects her hard work and dedication.

Maya-Faye Maxwell, riding Kroon, delivered an outstanding performance to claim 1st place in the High School Level 1 category.

Michaela continued her impressive form aboard Dreamy, securing 1st place in the High School Level 2 division and achieving exceptional Level 3 and Level 4 qualifying times in several classes.

Amie de Klerk and Faerie also performed admirably, finishing in 4th place. We are incredibly proud of all our riders and congratulate them on representing Woodridge with distinction.

Click here to visit the Equestrian Centre Facebook page

WINTER SPORTS DINNER

– Celebration of a Memorable Season

On Thursday, the 25th of June, the Woodridge sports community gathered for the inaugural annual Winter Sports Dinner, a special occasion that celebrated the achievements, commitment, and spirit of the winter sports season. The evening provided an opportunity for players, coaches, staff, and supporters to reflect on a season filled with memorable moments, hard-fought contests, and personal growth. It was a fitting celebration of the dedication shown by all our winter sports teams throughout the term.

A highlight of the evening was hearing from the 1st team coaches and captains, who shared reflections on their respective seasons. Their stories captured the highs and lows of competitive sport, the humorous moments that created lasting memories, and the journeys that strengthened friendships and forged deep bonds within their teams. While results and performances were acknowledged, the evening served as a reminder that sport teaches lessons that extend far beyond the field, court, or pitch. Resilience, teamwork, discipline, leadership, and perseverance are qualities that shape character and prepare young people for life. The Winter Sports Dinner was a wonderful celebration of these values and a meaningful way to bring another successful season to a close.

Click here to see the photographs

Congratulations!

LADIES PREMIER LEAGUE CRICKET

Congratulations to Quinn Foreman and Ashlee Buhr on their outstanding selection for the inaugural Lady's Schools National Cricket Franchise T20 Competition, to be held in Johannesburg this September. This prestigious opportunity is a fitting reward for the countless hours of dedication, hard work, and commitment both Quinn and Ashlee have invested in their cricket. Their selection is a testament not only to their talent and perseverance but also to the consistent effort they have shown both on and off the field. We are incredibly proud of Quinn and Ashlee's achievements and wish them every success as they represent their school and their respective franchises on this exciting national stage. Even more remarkable is that only three young ladies have been selected to participate in this national tournament, and two are from Woodridge – well done ladies!

Quinn Foreman

Ashlee Buhr

WORLD LIFESAVING CHAMPS 2026

Congratulations to Daniella Harcus and Gian Moolman on their selection to represent South Africa at World Lifesaving Champs 2026. The championships will take place from 2–6 December 2026 at Kings Beach and Newton Park Swimming Pool in Gqeberha. Their hard work, dedication, and commitment have earned them the opportunity to represent Lifesaving South Africa at this prestigious event. Well done!

Daniella Harcus

Gian Moolman

Term 2 Soirée: An Evening of Music & Warmth

Our Term 2 Soirée provided a wonderful opportunity to showcase the talents of our Grade 9 - 12 pupils in what was a truly memorable evening of music and performance.

Despite the cold winter weather, the event was exceptionally well attended, with many of our boarders turning out to support and encourage their peers. Their presence contributed to the warm and welcoming atmosphere that filled the College Hall.

The evening was engaging, with a diverse range of performances that highlighted the dedication, creativity, and musical abilities of our senior pupils. Beautiful melodies and captivating performances filled the hall, creating a sense of warmth that contrasted with the chilly evening outside.

As we reached the end of the first half of Term 2, the Soirée served as a fitting celebration of the hard work and talent within our school community. Thank you to all the performers, staff, and supporters who made the evening a success. We look forward to many more inspiring performances in the future.

Outdoor Education

As we build towards Outdoor Education Day on Saturday, 18 July, a number of important Inter-House and Outdoor Education activities will take place during the weeks leading up to the event.

Inter-House Trail Run

The annual Woodridge College Inter-House Trail Run took place on Monday, the 22nd of June, and once again proved to be one of the highlights of our school calendar. More than just a competition, the event provided an opportunity for our community to come together in celebration of running, friendship, and the special legacy of Troy Schofield. Troy was an integral part of the Woodridge family and a passionate supporter of trail running, and it was fitting that his memory was honoured through an event that embodies so much of what he loved about our school.

The Trail Run catered to all levels of participation, from our top-performing athletes pushing themselves for competitive results to those who simply wanted to enjoy the experience alongside friends. As runners traversed the campus, they were treated to the breathtaking beauty of the Woodridge grounds, a reminder of how fortunate we are to learn and grow in such a unique environment. The event was filled with enthusiasm, determination, and plenty of smiles, making it a wonderful occasion that celebrated both sporting excellence and the strong sense of community that defines Woodridge.

OVERALL RESULTS

1st - KOHLER
2nd - CARTER
3rd - FOUNDERS

OVERALL WINNERS OF THE TROY SCHOFIELD INTER-HOUSE TRAIL RUN

Girls
1st - Assia Rodrigues
2nd - Franki Dace
3rd - Ayla Zonnekein

Boys
1st - Lwanda Nkomana
2nd - Connor du Preez
3rd - Sango Mashaya

View the album on Flickr: https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjCXJxv

OUTDOOR EDUCATION DAY PREPARATION SESSIONS

As we look ahead to another exciting Outdoor Education Day, a series of compulsory preparation sessions has been scheduled to ensure that all participants are adequately prepared for the challenges and activities ahead. These sessions form an important part of the Outdoor Education programme and provide pupils with the opportunity to develop the skills, confidence and teamwork required for a successful experience.

Pupils participating in challenge course activities and skill rotations will attend sessions according to their selected activities. Attendance at these preparation sessions is compulsory, and any requests for exemption must be submitted in writing and approved by Mr Botha before the session date.

We encourage all pupils to make every effort to attend these sessions, as they will play a vital role in ensuring both the safety and enjoyment of Outdoor Education Day. We look forward to seeing our pupils embrace the challenge, develop new skills and continue building the spirit of adventure that is such an important part of the Woodridge experience.

The preparation schedule is as follows:

After Half-Term

Tuesday, 7 July – Girls
Wednesday, 8 July – Boys
Thursday, 9 July – Girls
Saturday, 11 July – Boarders on campus
Monday, 13 July – Boys
Tuesday, 14 July – Girls
Wednesday, 15 July – Boys
Thursday, 16 July – Girls
Friday, 17 July – Final Wall Team and Challenge Course practice opportunities

More than a school, an experience...

OUTDOOR EDUCATION DAY 2026 – IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Outdoor Education (OE) Day, taking place on Saturday, 18 July 2026, remains one of the most anticipated highlights of the Woodridge calendar and is a compulsory school attendance day for all College pupils. The day celebrates the core values that underpin our Outdoor Education programme, including adventure, resilience, leadership, teamwork, environmental stewardship and experiential learning. It also provides a unique opportunity to showcase the growth and development of Outdoor Education throughout a pupil's journey, from the Prep school years through to grade 12. This year, for the first time in years, the Grade 7s from the Prep will also be joining the activities on the day.

All pupils are required to attend registration in the Matric Quad by 07h45 sharp. While we appreciate that this is an early start to the day, punctuality is essential to ensure that activities commence on schedule and that pupils are present for their first events. We encourage parents to assist us by ensuring that pupils arrive in good time for registration. Attendance will be monitored throughout the day, and as with all compulsory school activities, any requests for exemption from participation must be submitted in an email and approved through Mr Botha. We look forward to another memorable OE Day that challenges, inspires and unites our school community.

The Woodridge Eco-Committee is excited to once again host the annual Run for Rhinos / Walk for Wildlife as part of the Outdoor Education programme's commitment to environmental awareness and conservation. Taking place on Thursday, 16 July at 18h00, this popular event brings together pupils, parents, and staff in support of an important cause while celebrating the natural environment that is such a special part of the Woodridge experience. The event raises funds and awareness for the One Land Love IT (OLLI) Foundation, which is dedicated to conservation initiatives and protecting wildlife for future generations. Whether participants choose to run or walk, the evening promises to be an enjoyable opportunity for our school community to unite around a shared commitment to conservation. Further details regarding the event will be communicated closer to the date.

ALL THINGS SCIENCE

On 25 May, we held our second Science Teachers' Training Workshop. More than twenty teachers from Jeffreys Bay, Humansdorp, Loerie and Thornhill attended the workshop at Woodridge.

The topics covered included the Particle Model of Matter and Chemical Reactions. We are planning to host a Mathematics Teachers' Training Workshop, as well as a STEM Day for learners from the participating schools, before the end of the year.

Woodridge, with the generous support of Kouga Wind Farm, is committed to playing its part in advancing and supporting the local communities within our region.

The Experience ...

Save the Date

Our Woodridge Founders Weekend is fast approaching, and we are excited to celebrate with our entire Woodridge community. The Prep's 90th anniversary marks a significant milestone in our school's history. It is an opportunity to honour those who have gone before us and to celebrate the Christ-led values and traditions that continue to shape Woodridge today.

The campus will be buzzing with activity throughout Saturday, 18 July, with food trucks, reunions, sporting action, and plenty of opportunities to gather as a community, spending time with fellow Woodridge families, alumni, staff, and members of our wider local community. The day will culminate with the iconic Wall, always a highlight of the celebrations.

The festivities begin on Friday evening, 17 July, with a spit braai. We encourage all families to indicate their attendance at any of the events and to join us for this special community gathering.

Look out for an email from the OWA with links to book and pay!

THANK YOU

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WOODRIDGE

McDonald's

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INVESTMENT COMPANY

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Staff News

goodbye

At the end of this term, we will bid farewell to Mr Daniel Ward, who has accepted an opportunity to continue his teaching career abroad. During his time at Woodridge, Mr Ward has made a significant contribution to the life of the College, investing wholeheartedly in our pupils and community through his dedication, professionalism and commitment to education. His positive influence in both the classroom and wider school environment has left a lasting impact, and he will be greatly missed by colleagues, pupils and parents alike. While we are naturally sad to see him leave, we recognise that this next step represents an exciting opportunity for his personal and professional growth, and we fully support him as he embarks on this new chapter. We thank Mr Ward for his outstanding service to Woodridge and wish him every success and happiness in the years ahead.

Congratulations!

Woodridge College proudly congratulates Jason Syce on his selection as the assistant coach of the Eastern Province U16A Hockey Team for the upcoming Inter-Provincial Tournament during the half-term break in KZN. This prestigious appointment is a fitting recognition of Jason's unwavering passion for hockey and his commitment to the development of young athletes. His dedication, knowledge of the game, and ability to inspire players have earned him tremendous respect within the hockey community. We are delighted to see his hard work and expertise acknowledged at the provincial level and wish Jason and the Eastern Province U16A team every success as they prepare to compete on the national stage. Jason has also been appointed as the South African U18 manager for the SA tour, playing in the U21 interprovincial tournament in Port Elizabeth in August.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Zackery Hendricks on his appointment as Head Coach of the Eastern Province U18B Hockey Team for the upcoming tournament in KwaZulu-Natal next week. This well-earned recognition reflects Zackery's dedication to the sport, his commitment to nurturing young talent and the positive influence he continues to have on the players under his guidance. His passion for hockey, combined with his strong leadership and coaching expertise, has contributed significantly to the development of aspiring athletes. Woodridge College is proud of Zackery's achievement and wishes him and the Eastern Province U18B team every success as they take on this exciting challenge.

LOOKING AHEAD

DATES TO DIARISE

- Tuesday: 7 July, School commences
- Tuesday: 7 July, Meet the Teacher
- Friday: 17 July, Founder's Day Assembly @ 12h00
- Friday & Saturday: 17-18 July, Reunion
- Saturday: 18 July, OE Day
- Monday: 20 July, School Day for Grade 12s only
- Tuesday: 21 July, Start of Exams, Grades 8 - 11
- Click here for the College Monthly Planner *Subject to change*