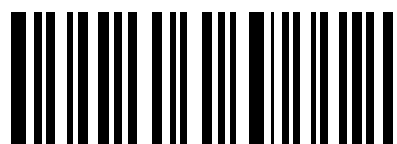




College

30 January, 2026



Dear Parents

As we come to the end of the third week of Term 1, I would like to take a moment to reflect on how important it is for the pupils to balance and pace themselves in the interests of their overall well-being.

The first term is always a busy one. New routines are established, academic expectations are set, sport and cultural programmes gain momentum, and school life moves very quickly. It is often an exciting time, but it is also a demanding one. With this in mind, it is helpful to remember that Term 1 is a long race, not a short dash. Our pupils are running a marathon, not a sprint.

At this point in the term, we, the adults in our children's lives, need to encourage them to think carefully about how they manage their energy, focus, and commitments. Sustained effort over time requires good habits: consistent sleep, balanced nutrition, sensible organisation of work, and allowing time to rest and reset. Working hard is important, but working wisely is essential if they are to maintain motivation and concentration right through to the end of the term.

We would like to ask for your partnership at home in reinforcing this message. Gentle check-ins about workload, helping them plan, and reminding them that it is good to pace themselves. This really does make a meaningful difference. Little, steady progress each day is far more effective than bursts of intense effort followed by exhaustion.

Our staff continue to support pupils in finding this balance. We encourage commitment and excellence while also being mindful of well-being and sustainability. When pupils learn to manage their energy early in the term, they are far better equipped to meet challenges with confidence and resilience as the weeks progress.

This week, I attended the IEB Matric Examination feedback meeting for the 2025 IEB results. It was encouraging to note that, as an examining body, the IEB continues to uphold rigorous academic standards rather than pursuing targets that can sometimes undermine authentic educational quality.

Of ongoing concern at a national level, however, are the persistently low "reading to understand" levels evident among many candidates. Equally troubling is the significant rise in anxiety among matriculants writing their final examinations, driven in large part by the intense competition for limited spaces at tertiary institutions. That said, learners who do gain entry to tertiary study are well positioned for success, having developed the critical thinking and analytical skills fostered through the IEB examination process. These skills, underpinned by strong teaching practice, provide a clear advantage to pupils in independent schools.

As a school, we continue to work closely with the IEB and actively encourage our teachers to apply to become IEB markers. This not only ensures they remain deeply engaged with their subject disciplines but also allows them to stay informed of emerging trends and expectations within classrooms across South Africa.

In conclusion, and as always, thank you for your ongoing support and involvement in your child's school journey. We look forward to a term marked not only by achievement, but by healthy, sustainable effort from start to finish.

Luke Hartley



“

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

- 1 Peter 2:9

”

1936 - 2026



THIS IS WHERE THE MAGIC HAPPENS

Unveiling Drama

The notice on my Drama classroom door says: 'This Is Where The Magic Happens'. Yes, I'm a Harry Potter fan, and yes, I ask my

senior pupils to take the Hogwarts House Sorting test so that I can put their names on a Hogwarts House board in my class. And, yes, it is because I get the pleasure of saying (in a dramatic voice), "10 points to Gryffindor!" when a pupil knows the answer to a question, makes me laugh, or does well in an assessment. But we don't wave wands, make potions, or learn how to play Quidditch; that's not the kind of magic that happens in my Drama class.

Teenagers today are growing up in a challenging world, one that is vastly different from the one in which I grew up. I, as a teacher's child, attended Woodridge in the age of corporal punishment, minimal supervision, and invisibility (not Harry's cloak, unfortunately).

Woodridge didn't offer Drama or Art as subjects in those days, and the only Music offered was piano lessons with a frizzy redhead in the afternoons. For a sensitive, creative soul like me, a space without those subjects left me feeling like I was a failure, like I didn't belong anywhere.

I didn't measure up to the top academics or top sportswomen. I didn't excel at Outdoor Education or student leadership. Being silent and invisible was my experience. That experience shaped not only who I became but also how I teach today.

And now, I welcome into my classroom: the top academics and sports stars, the Outdoor Education champions, and the brilliant student leaders. But the ones I look for are the very children who need the space I never had: the sensitive, creative ones who might slip through the cracks. And when I recognise them, I encourage them to join my class.

"But, I don't want to be an actor!" I hear this often. And this might surprise you, but Drama is so much more than just acting. I can provide a list of skills and abilities that these pupils can learn in my class, but I'd rather tell you a story. A few years ago, I noticed a feisty young lady in my Grade 9 class. I told her that she should consider taking Drama as a subject because she was a talented performer, but she said no, she was going to study Medicine and didn't want to be an actress. Fast forward to Grade 10. She didn't choose Drama, but every time I saw her, I'd ask when she'd be joining my class. Then the Inter-House play auditions began, and she got a part. I watched her acting with passion.

That was the turning point, and after the plays, she decided to join Drama. In her matric year, we were putting on a musical. I needed an actress for one of the lead roles, and I knew she was perfect for the part, but she refused. I called on her piano teacher to help me entice her and finally managed to get her to 'just read the script'. She did and grudgingly admitted that she liked the part. Then we persuaded her to sing one of the songs. She did and grudgingly admitted that she liked the song.

Continues on next page...



THIS IS WHERE THE MAGIC HAPPENS

Drama Magic

Then I asked her to consider taking the part. It took her a day or two, but she eventually, grudgingly, accepted. The music teacher and I celebrated privately. At our first rehearsal, I was working with the other leads in my classroom, while the rest of the cast were learning a song in the hall. Later, I went back to the hall to check on their progress. The chorus was singing bravely, and I heard a small voice, but I couldn't see my feisty girl. She was crouched down next to the piano, too shy to stand up and sing.

That girl became the one who brought the house down on opening night, who received the most applause for her performances throughout the entire run of the musical. She stood up and claimed that character, embodied her, gave her depth and authenticity. She belted out her songs and made us laugh and cry. She owned that stage and held the audience in the palm of her hand.

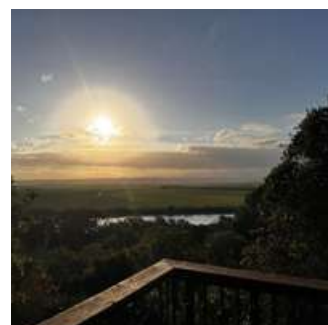
And yes, she is currently studying Medicine, and yes, she is going to be very successful in her field. She is never going to be an actress, but Drama gave her something more. It showed her how magical she is.

Caren Bestbier

"Overcome the notion that you must be regular. It robs you of the chance to be extraordinary."

- Uta Hagen





Prefect Camp

The recent Prefects' Camp provided a valuable opportunity for our prefects to connect meaningfully with one another while intentionally planning for the year ahead. Time was spent reflecting on what they hope to achieve in their year of office and the kind of leaders they want to be within the Woodridge community.

Through a series of thoughtful talks, prefects explored the tone of the school, grounding their leadership in the values we hold dear as a College. A session on conflict management equipped them with practical tools for navigating challenges with maturity and empathy, while discussions on what we expect of a Woodridge student reinforced the standards, responsibility, and integrity required of those who lead by example. The camp concluded with a powerful focus on a school of belonging, reminding prefects that leadership at Woodridge is ultimately about fostering connection, inclusion, and a strong sense of community for every pupil.



Academics

At the first Monday assembly of the term last week, we recognised those who had performed at a high level and also those who made a considerable effort to improve on their term 2 efforts.

Those who were recognised for a most improved effort had improved their overall aggregate by more than 5%. This improvement is a result of a more focused approach and a more determined effort.

Most Improved Term 3 2025

Grade 8	Grade 9	10	11
CLOETE Martin	BOUCHER Reid	HUANG Nick	ALUTENI Ndapewa
JACOBS Noah	FERREIRA Edward	MAXWELL Maya-Faye	ARMOED Keira-Lee
KHWITSHANA Phelo	FERREIRA Stefan	MCNICOL Rebecca	BELLINGAN Kaitlyn
MTHIMUNYE Lunawe	JAM-JAM Cwenga	NYILA Mhlali	DINWIDDY Lucy
SNYMAN Jordan	MEHLO Liqhamile	ONGOLE Joshua	DUVAL Jac
THORNTON Jenna	MICHAU Michael	PRINS Adam	HURLEY Ethan
	NEETHLING Gabrielle	SCOTT Elan	PLEDGER Callum
	SNELI Sinda	SECCOMBE Alinah	REITZ Annabelle
	VAN NIEKERK Sadie	STRYDOM Tertius	

Academic excellence is a result of consistent effort over the course of the year. The top ten in each grade need to be commended for their dedication and perseverance toward their academics

and for setting very high standards for themselves. We are proud of their efforts and look forward to seeing if the Grade 11s from last year can emulate the performances of the 2025 matric cohort.

TOP 10 - Term 3 2025

Grade 11	Grade 10	Grade 9	Grade 8
1 DEARMER Siân	1 HERSELMAN Kate	1 MONTAGNA Olivia	1 MEARA Amelie
2 MASOKA Salizwa	2 STOTTELAAR Rebecca	2 MASHELELE Iminathi	2 MOLOI Tau
3 O'RIAIN Alexa	3 CHANG Lawrence	3 MEARA Connor	3 VAN DER BERG Lumae
4 PEENS Sienna	4 DEGOUMOIS Britt	4 CHANTSON Ava	4 NGWEBA Buhle
5 HORAK Vaclav	5 NEL Francois	5 NOGQALA Sange	4 SWAYENA Simliziwe
6 ACKERMAN Morgan	6 HOLME Mia	6 POTGIETER Hannah	6 THORNTON Alexa
7 MAPALING Mia	7 CHANTSON Luke	7 WEBB Gaby	7 LUO Xinyu
8 ZENZILE Sihle	8 LESHEM Ella	8 HAMLET Luca	8 DUBE Likhwa
9 BONNASSE Zara	9 THOMPSON Harry	9 JANSSEN VAN VUUREN Marcus	9 MTHIMUNYE Lunawe
10 MOOLMAN Gian	10 VICKERY Callyn	10 LUDIDI Tandelwethu	10 SEYMOUR Amy

Congratulations!



Academics

Academic Honours is the highest Academic Award a student can achieve at Woodridge College. Five of our Grade 12 students qualified for this prestigious award of Academic Honours. This award is an acknowledgement of years of hard work, grit and determination to always achieve at the highest level. They are commended for an excellent effort in pursuit of excellence.

(From left to right: Vaclav Horak, Siân Dearmer, Dr Logie, Sienna Peens, Salizwa Masoka, Alexa O'Riain)



Grade 8 Bubble Camp

The Bubble Camps are much more than a single night away from home. They mark an important Grade 8 rite of passage at Woodridge. The Bubble Camps are a first real step into the College's outdoor culture and a purposeful introduction to the values we hold dear: resilience, initiative, responsibility, teamwork, and kindness. The bush camp is deliberately simple, with few comforts. It is in these pared-back conditions that learners begin to grow. They get an introduction into learning to cope with discomfort, sleep outdoors, support one another, and keep going when things feel unfamiliar. These shared experiences are powerful builders of character.



Grade 8

Bell Ringing



The bell-ringing assembly is the formal welcome of the Grade 8s into the Woodridge family.

When the Grade 8s are invited to put their blazers on, they are acknowledging the responsibility they have toward holding the school's values close to their hearts. The blazer represents a higher expectation because we believe in their potential.



Cricket

The Woodridge College Girls 1st XI cricket team produced an outstanding performance at the Phase 2 SA Schools T20 Competition in East London, narrowly missing out on the title after an exciting final. Challenging weather conditions saw rain reduce overs throughout the tournament, but Woodridge adapted superbly. They opened with a six-wicket victory over Stirling Girls XI, chasing down 64 with composed contributions from Quinn Foreman (26) and Ava Horner (16).

A second rain-affected match against defending champions Nomandi Girls XI saw exceptional bowling from Ashley Pietersen (4/14) and Ava Horner (3/18), before a calm run chase led by an unbeaten Ashlee Buhr (38) secured a 10-run win and a place in the final. In a much-anticipated rematch, Woodridge dominated early with the ball, but Nomandi recovered to post 116. A spirited chase followed, highlighted by strong innings from Quinn Foreman (42) and Ava Horner (28), but Woodridge fell just four runs short. Despite the narrow loss, the team can be extremely proud of their resilience, teamwork, and high-quality cricket throughout the tournament.



BOYS' VS WESTERING, DANIEL PIENAAR AND ALEXANDER ROAD

The Woodridge U14A cricket team made an excellent start to their PE T20 League campaign with a convincing victory over Westering. After winning the toss, Woodridge elected to bat first and posted a competitive 156/8 in their 20 overs. Austin Botes anchored the innings superbly with an unbeaten 40, while Tyler Potgieter provided valuable support with a well-compiled 33. The bowlers then delivered an outstanding performance, applying consistent pressure to restrict Westering to just 70/9 after 20 overs.

Lejac de Meillon was the standout with the ball, claiming 4/18, while Tyler Potgieter (2/9) and Tanatswa Chari (2/13) also made key contributions. This comprehensive all-round performance saw Woodridge secure a dominant win and kick off their league campaign in impressive fashion.

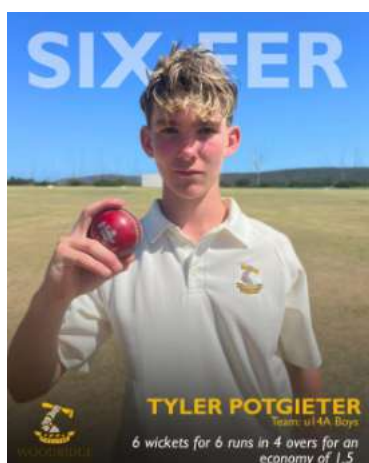
Last week, our U15A Cricket team played against Daniel Pienaar and recorded a convincing win. A standout performance from Quinn Foreman, taking 5 wickets in the game and more impressively, she picked up a wonderful hat-trick – a wonderful start to the year!



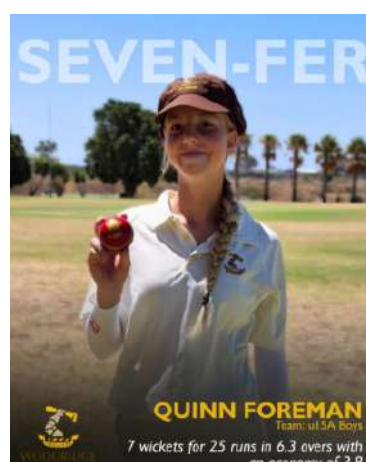
Cricket

The 2nd team also recorded a good victory over Daniel Pienaar, winning by 5 wickets. Mark Janse van Rensburg top-scored with 44 and also took 2/15 with the ball in hand. Unfortunately, the 1st XI struggled with both bat and ball and went down by 8 wickets – a tough start!

This past weekend, Woodridge played against Alexander Road High School. Our cricketers performed well across all age groups. The U14A team batted first and scored a mammoth 359/8, with major contributions coming from Tyler Potgieter (100), Josh Hickman (86), and Tanatswa Chari (56). Alex was then bowled out for 49, with Tyler Potgieter taking 6/6. Woodridge won by 310 runs.



The U15A team, playing at Alex, batted first, scoring a good 242/10 with Juan Blou (89 not out) and Tylor Merrington and Ashlee Buhr both scoring 42. Woodridge bowled Alex out for 95, with Quinn Foreman getting a very good 7/25 with the ball – a fantastic effort! Woodridge won by 147 runs.

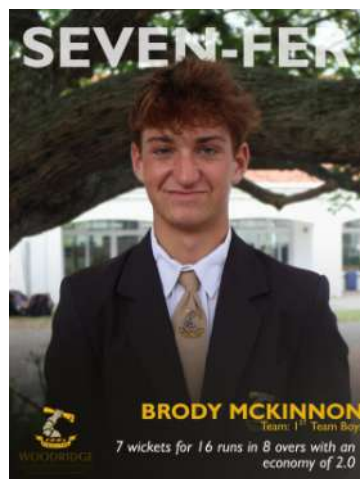


Cricket

The 2nd Team playing on Knight Field, batted first scoring 346/7, with major contributions coming from Seth Rensburg (133), Stefan Ferreira (53), and Edward Ferreira (50). Woodridge managed to bowl Alex out for 41, with Thomas Abernethy being the pick of the bowlers (5/10). Woodridge won by 305 runs.



The 1st XI bowler first against Alex, and managed to get them all out for 66, with Brody McKinnon excelling with the ball (7/16). Woodridge then chased down the score with Stephen Swanepoel scoring an unbeaten 32. Woodridge won by 4 wickets.



Water Polo

This past weekend, our 1st Girls Water Polo team participated in the annual Brian Baker Water Polo tournament in Makhanda. In an extremely strong field, our girls played with heart and determination, ending in 18th position amongst the top water polo girls' teams in the country. Notable performances were against Hudson Park (3-6 down) in the pool stages, against Alexander Road in the Qualifiers (18-3 win), and then a very close encounter against Collegiate, losing in a penalty shoot-out in the play-off game.



Woodridge held its first round of fixtures at home against Pearson, St Andrews College, and Glenwood House this past weekend. The 1st team boys had good wins against Pearson (8-5), Glenwood (9-2), and ECO Eels (10-9). The 2nd team had a good win against Pearson 2nds (9-1) but struggled against the St Andrews U15 & 2nd teams. The U15A team struggled against the Pearson and St Andrews 2nd teams, but the U14A team managed good wins against both Pearson (14-0) and St Andrews College (5-3).



The girls' U14, U15, and 2nd teams used the opportunity to get some game time against one another as preparation for some tough fixtures ahead.



Sports

Our 1st and 2nd tennis teams played against Collegiate this past week in their first league matches of the season. Both teams played exceptionally well, with the 1st team winning 3-1 in the first division and the 2nd team winning 4-0 in the second division of the league. Our tennis continues to grow from strength to strength as the players continue to set high standards for themselves.



EQUESTRIAN

Several of our riders participated in the Western Mounted Games qualifiers this past weekend and produced very pleasing results. On day 1, Michaela Wedderburn placed 1st in the L1 category, and Amie de Klerk placed 3rd in the L3 category for High School riders. On day 2, Michaela once again placed 1st in the L1 category, and Amie placed 1st in the L3 category for High School riders.

Several of our other riders competed in the SANESA Core league show held at PERC. Many achieved a podium finish, which bodes well for the year ahead. Our riders, Ella Clemence, Kungamsa Sitoto, Iviwe Ngangelizwe, and Annabelle Reitz, all need to be commended on a successful start.



Surf Lifesaving Club

Our Surf Lifesavers have started the year with energy and enthusiasm. The year started with an intense beach training session to ensure all our lifesavers have the necessary skills to perform the wonderful service each weekend. Woodridge remains the only school in the world with its own Surf Lifesaving club, which provides our students with the opportunity to serve others, a responsibility they do with passion and pride.



INTERHOUSE ATHLETICS

On Wednesday, we held our annual Interhouse Athletics day. As always, it was a spirited day with the School coming together for the first of our big interhouse events. The overall winning House was Kohler, with Carter House winning the 'House with the best spirit'.

The senior Victor Ludorum for boys was Vaclav Horak, and the senior Victrix Ludorum was Katelyn Stamos. Amongst the juniors, Sango Mashaya was the Victor Ludorum and Addison Shaw was the Victrix Ludorum. It was a wonderful day with the highlight being the manner in which the matrics led from the front and the way in which the school supported their efforts.



Outdoor Classroom

The Grade 8 Geography pupils have been learning about scale, and each class was tasked with drawing one of their peers on the board to scale. This was a great exercise, not only to encourage team building, but also a funny and practical way to learn about a tricky concept.



The Grade 9 Geography classes have been using playdough to learn about contours and landforms. Divided into pairs, each group was given some tools to recreate various landforms. This is a creative, fun, and practical way to teach these concepts, especially for pupils who are kinaesthetic learners.



This week Mr Rathbone took the grade 10 life science class to the secret valley to explore the abiotic factors that effect biome.



Mr Watsons Grade 12 English class recently got out and about in search of inspiration for an upcoming assignment by using our wonderful natural environment. The class then tried to see how many students could fit into his old Land Rover for fun – not part of the curriculum but fun was had by all!



News



Mrs Anneliese van Niekerk, who has been our Head of Mathematics for the past seven years, will be leaving us at the end of the term to go into semi-retirement. Mrs van Niekerk has been such an instrumental part of our academic programme over the years and has contributed to water polo, hockey, cycling, and has completed 'The WAY' on numerous occasions. Mrs van Niekerk will be missed, as she has left her footprint on Woodridge College.



We are delighted to share the wonderful news that Mrs Manesha Boreham and her husband, Daniel, are expecting a little one, adding to their family. Their baby is due at the end of July, and this is a very special and exciting time for them. We wish the Borehams every blessing as they prepare to welcome their little one into the World.



It's Cricket time again!

The OWA Traditional Cricket fixture vs Woodridge is coming up on the 8th February, and we're looking forward to an epic day with great cricket, good banter and even better company.

And to make it even better, Old Boy and Cricket legend Colin Ingram (Class of 2003) will be back on Knight Field for the OWA 1st team! You can bet the schoolboys are already buzzing with excitement to play against him.

Everyone is welcome! Anyone else wanting to come out and support, see the campus or just catch up, please come join us too....



Come to Botswana



13-20 AUGUST

ONLY **8** PLACES LEFT


GAME DRIVES


AMAZING SIGHTINGS


EPIC MEALS


WILD CAMPS

Book your place now! | Ms Broadway and Mr Watson for details



January

Dates to diarise



Thursday: 12 March, at 18:30

***The 2026 Woodridge Inter-House plays will be performed on 12 March at 18:30 in the Woodridge College Hall. The Houses will each perform the starter play entitled "Slime & Punishment". (A starter play is where each House has been provided with the same beginning of a play, to which they must write the second half.) Tickets are R50 and will be on sale at the door.*



Friday: 30 January, Open day 3-7pm



[Click here for the 2026 College Monthly Planner](#) [*Subject to change*](#)