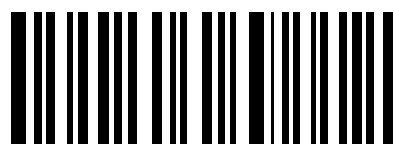




College Termly

26 March, 2026



1936 - 2026



**WOODRIDGE
PREPARATORY**
celebrating 90 years

More than a school, an experience...

Headlines

The Head's Letter	03
Busy Pupils Often Thrive Academically	04
Preventing molehills from becoming mountains	05
Words from The Word	06
Outdoor Education	07
QuadFest	08
Matric Dance 2026	09
Interhouse Plays	10
Sports News	12
A Golden Reunion	13
College News	17
Staff News	18
Looking Ahead	19
	21



Dear Parents

As we reach the end of a full and rewarding first term, it is a good moment to pause and reflect on the journey we have shared over the past few months.

It has been a busy term in every sense of the word. From the classroom to the sports field, from the stage to the grade camps, our students have been deeply engaged in the life of the College. What continues to stand out is not simply the level of activity, but the personal development that has taken place in the young people entrusted to our care.

In the classroom, we have seen curiosity grow, confidence develop, and resilience emerge as students have engaged with their academic work. On the sports fields, students have represented the College with pride, learning lessons about teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. On the stage and in the creative spaces of the school, we have watched talent flourish and students find their voice. Our camps and outdoor experiences have once again reminded us of the unique Woodridge environment where nature is used to nurture, and where young people discover strengths they did not know they possessed.

As staff, it is a privilege to witness these moments of growth each day. Often, the most meaningful development happens quietly: a student overcoming a fear, stepping into a leadership opportunity, supporting a teammate, or simply realising they are capable of more than they thought possible. These are the moments that shape character and form the foundation of the Woodridge experience.

None of this would be possible without the partnership we share with you as parents. Your encouragement, support, and trust allow us to work together to guide and support your children as they grow. The holiday that lies ahead offers an important opportunity for rest and renewal after a demanding term. We encourage our pupils to step away from the routines of school, recharge their energy, and spend meaningful time with family and friends.

For many in our community, the coming days also mark the celebration of Easter, a time when Christians reflect on the profound sacrifice made by our Lord and the hope and renewal that this season represents. It is a moment to pause, to give thanks, and to reflect on the deeper values that guide our lives.

May the holiday be a time of rest, reflection, and renewed strength for all members of our community. We look forward to welcoming our pupils back next term, refreshed and ready for the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

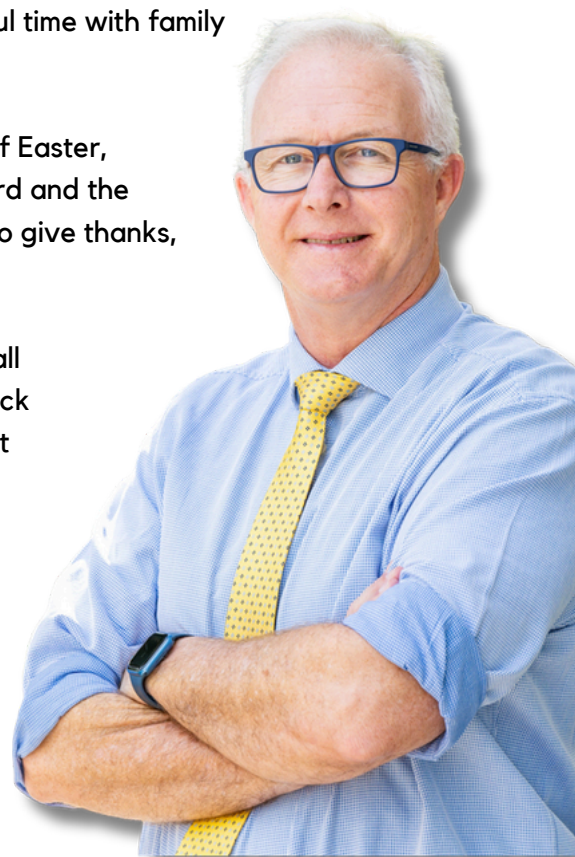
Wishing you and your families a peaceful and blessed Easter.

Luke Hartley

“

Pause, to
give
thanks,
and to
reflect on
the deeper
values that
guide our
lives.

”



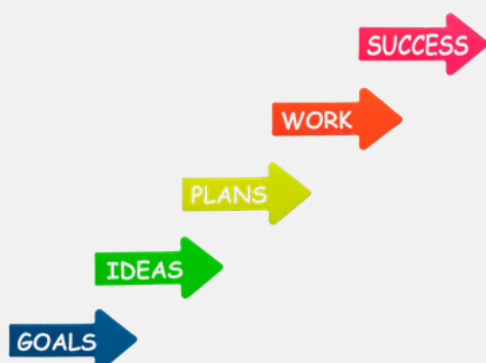
Busy Pupils Often Thrive Academically

At Woodridge, we celebrate the broad involvement of our pupils, not only because it enriches school life, but because it helps shape well-rounded, capable young people who will grow into adults of significance. Pupils who take part in a range of activities, whether sport, cultural programmes, community service, or outdoor education, often thrive academically as well. While it may seem counterintuitive, both research and experience show that healthy involvement can support academic success.

Pupils with full schedules quickly develop strong time management habits. When their afternoons are filled with practices, rehearsals, or meetings, they learn to plan, prioritise tasks, and avoid last-minute rushes. These skills boost academic performance and prepare them well for life beyond school.

A well-structured day also helps many pupils concentrate better. Clear commitments create a natural rhythm of schoolwork, activities, and home time. This structure encourages them to use study periods more efficiently and reduces the risk of wasting long, unplanned stretches of time.

Extracurricular involvement builds resilience, teamwork, discipline, and problem-solving. These skills have a direct influence on academic success. Whether pupils are learning to communicate on the sports field or practising persistence in a music ensemble, these habits strengthen the way they approach classroom challenges.



Busy pupils are also surrounded by peers who are similarly motivated and organised. This environment fosters healthy expectations and reinforces good habits such as completing assignments on time, preparing for assessments, and striving to do their best.

Of course, being involved sometimes means missing class time. For example, going away on a sports tour is exciting, but it also requires preparation so that pupils can enjoy the experience, represent the school well, and stay on top of their academic responsibilities.

Before departing, pupils should speak with their teachers about lessons they will miss, collect work or check where it is available online, note deadlines, and download any required materials. Planning for a smooth return is just as important. Catching up on missed work, reviewing notes, and even organising their school bag for the first day back helps ensure academic progress continues without interruption. Just as they checked in with their teachers before they left, they should check in again on their return and make use of afternoon clinics to get input on missed content.

Dr Logie

Preventing molehills from becoming mountains

A Term 1 highlight for the Psychology Department was our involvement in the grade camps. A recurring theme that wove itself through our reflections on the pupils' experiences was the impact of unaddressed stress. With many barriers to learning and functioning, early identification and intervention can prevent a small passing difficulty from becoming a growing and persistent challenge. Stress is one of these barriers.

At the Grade 12 camp, pupils participated in a talk on the risks of not addressing stress early on. A key focus was on how high levels of sustained stress can increase the likelihood of turning to ineffective or potentially addictive coping mechanisms. While these may provide short-term relief, they often have longer-term consequences that ultimately make stress more difficult to manage. Insights from the learners highlighted how the desire for social connection and approval can contribute to overlooking early signs of stress. What often begins as a way to unwind may gradually become a default coping strategy, delaying more adaptive support-seeking. A key takeaway was the importance of early recognition and support. Strengthening learners' ability to identify early warning signs of stress, alongside normalising help-seeking, remains central to promoting more healthy and sustainable coping.

On another camp, we witnessed the Gr 9s respond to the stress that came with making mistakes during their hiking navigation. We noticed how a lack of awareness of rising tension and distress increased the pupils' risk of difficulties with focusing on important details and sound decision-making. The pupils were guided through strategies to identify their stress levels from moment to moment, and practice coping skills to regulate their physical and emotional strain and improve their distress tolerance and problem-solving ability.

Term 1 has reminded us how important it is for pupils to seek support as stress and academic demands increase. Stress can be a useful motivator in small doses, but an increasing danger when left unmanaged. Too often, support is only accessed once stress has escalated to a point where it becomes difficult to manage. At this stage, once stress has escalated, emotional regulation becomes more difficult to manage; this reduces the effectiveness of coping strategies and limits a pupil's ability to respond proactively.

As we take a break before entering the valleys of Term 2 - an exam term - we encourage parents and pupils to give some thought to their personal warning signs of increasing stress. Then consider what plans of action can be put in place to deal with small moments of stress before they grow into uncontrolled overwhelm.

'What the camps taught us about navigating stress'

Stress is not just about workload. It's about whether a pupil feels able to manage that workload. The key question for preparing for Term 2 is "how can I be better prepared for dealing with expected challenges in a healthy way?" Below are some ideas to guide your thoughts around stress management.

Early signs of stress	Skills that help with stress reduction	Healthy coping strategies	Unhealthy coping strategies
• Difficulty concentrating or avoiding schoolwork • "Forgetting" or losing assignments • Irritability, mood swings, shutdown or withdrawal. • Not enough rest/"play" time • Increased conflict with loved ones or friends. • Physical symptoms: headaches, fatigue, stomach aches • Sudden or frequent cold and flu-like symptoms • Too much sleep or too little sleep	• Setting goals • Mapping out steps • Estimating and managing time effectively • Schedules and calendars • Strategies to help yourself get started on a task (e.g. "The 2 Minute Rule") • Strategies to help yourself remember tasks/stay on track (reminders/alarms/diary) • Managing frustration and anxiety	• Talk to someone you trust • Break tasks into smaller steps • Take short breaks (use a timer) – get fresh air! • Move your body (walk, stretch, sport) • Get enough sleep • Use breathing or calming techniques • Limit screen time when overwhelmed • Stay organised (lists, planners) • Do something you enjoy • Ask for help when stuck	• Avoiding or ignoring work • Procrastinating • Withdrawing from others • Excessive screen time/escapism • Negative self-talk • Lashing out or aggression • Shutting down or "numbing out" • Overworking without breaks • Risk-taking behaviours (not thinking before acting) • Using substances to cope • Unhealthy eating habits

*Leah ter Bruggen &
Julie du Toit*

[BOOK NOW](#)



Words from The Word,

It is difficult to imagine that the first term has already come and gone. So much has been learned and gained over the past three months. In the divinity space, we have covered a whole host of subjects, from a historical case for the Bible to what it means to be made in the image of God. We have also spent considerable time in Q&A answering many of our pupils' questions. Questions ranging from 'What is sin' to "What is God's will for my life?" And of course, it is a joy to have some of these lessons in "the great outdoors", where God's creation is wondrously on display, because of the campus that we have.



It is a humbling privilege to be able to engage with pupils around these valuable topics. Likewise, it is encouraging to see their genuine interest and concern regarding their walk with God. As always, my prayer for them is that they would firstly know Him, grow in His grace, and live for His glory.

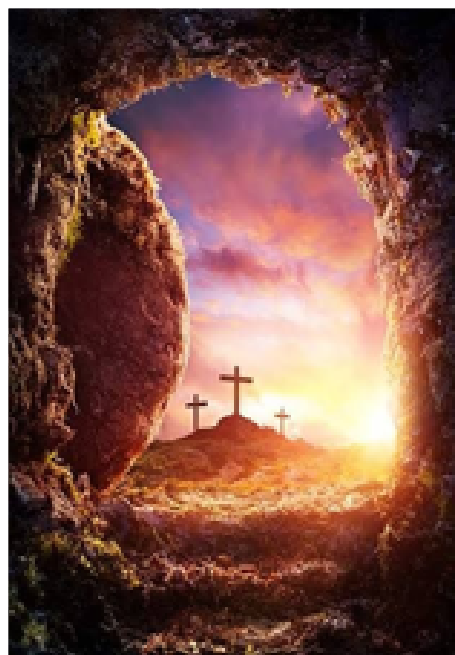
In our chapel space on Sunday night, we have continued in our study of the Gospel of Matthew. This term, we covered two series. The first series was on discipleship. What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? (Matthew 10) Our second series was a look at "Faith", in particular what people in Jesus' day believed about Him (Matthew 11). These messages were accompanied by prayer and song, especially the pupils' favourite chorus, "10000 Reasons".

Wesley Henrico

ANCHORED in love

As the term draws to a close, we enter the Easter period, which is a significant time on the Christian calendar. We remember our Lord Jesus' sacrifice on the cross when He died to make payment for our sins. We also remember His resurrection, a confirmation that the payment for sin was satisfied in Him. Now the promise of forgiveness and life is available to all who believe. What a great message of hope to our world.

May you have a blessed Easter as we remember together this wondrous hope of love of God displayed in Jesus Christ.

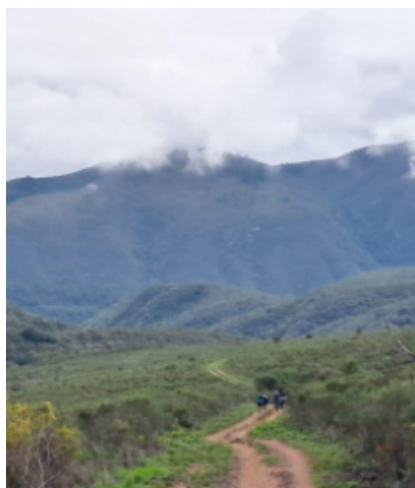


**For our sake he made him to
be sin who knew no sin, so
that in him we might become
the righteousness of God.
(2 Corinthians 5:21)**



Outdoor Education

TERM 1 RECAP



Term 1 has once again affirmed that Outdoor Education at Woodridge is not simply a programme, but a lived experience that shapes character, builds resilience, and strengthens our sense of belonging. Across all grades, pupils were given opportunities to step beyond their comfort zones, engage with the natural environment, and grow in ways that no classroom alone can offer.

The journey began with the Grade 8 Bubble Camps, where our prefects played a vital role in guiding and supporting the younger pupils.

It was particularly encouraging to see how those who had completed 'The Way' back in Grade 10 stood out in their leadership as more confident, capable, and intentional in their actions.

This continues to reinforce the long-term value of our leadership pathways and the importance of experiential growth over time.

The Grade 8 Camps themselves were a true introduction to the realities of outdoor living. Despite challenging weather conditions, the experience proved deeply valuable.



Nature Nurtures

The rain, rather than being a setback, became a powerful teacher, highlighting the importance of proper waterproofing, reinforcing tent discipline, and encouraging personal responsibility. Beyond the physical challenges, the thoughtful integration of arts, music, culture, and Woodridge heritage added richness to the experience, making it both meaningful and memorable for pupils and staff alike.

For our Grade 9s, the Bronze Adventurous Journey presented its own unique challenges. Due to a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak, the planned route had to be changed at short notice, requiring significant coordination and adaptability. The shift to the Elands River Valley, made possible through collaboration with multiple landowners, demonstrated the resilience and problem-solving that underpin Outdoor Education. Despite these obstacles, the expedition was a success, with pupils embracing the journey and all that it demanded of them.

The Grade 10 camp in Nieu-Bethesda stood out as a highlight of the term. The experience was both enriching and engaging, with the visit to the new Dinosaur Museum adding an exciting and educational dimension. It was a reminder that Outdoor Education is not only about physical challenge, but also about curiosity, discovery, and connecting learning to the wider world.

Leadership development continued to deepen at the Grade 11 leadership camp held at Bruintjieskraal and Kudu Kaya. The inclusion of the TLT (Tomorrow's Leaders in Training) programme added significant value, equipping pupils with practical leadership tools and encouraging reflection on their roles within the school community. These experiences are instrumental in shaping the tone of the school and preparing pupils to lead with authenticity and purpose.

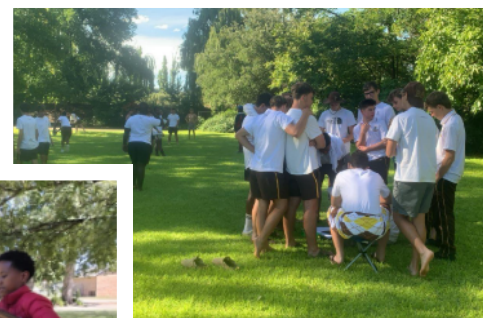
Early feedback from the Grade 12 camp has been overwhelmingly positive, suggesting that this final shared experience continues to provide a meaningful space for reflection, connection, and closure as pupils prepare for life beyond school.

Supporting all of these experiences is the Grade 8 and 9 Outdoor Education curriculum, which continues to provide essential foundational skills. Through structured lessons, including rucksack packing, stove use and safety, route card planning, an introduction to the President's Award, and post-expedition reflection, pupils are equipped not only to participate, but to engage confidently and responsibly in their outdoor journeys.

As we reflect on the term, it is clear that Outdoor Education remains central to the Woodridge ethos. It is where resilience is built in the rain, leadership is tested on the trail, and friendships are strengthened around the campfire. Most importantly, it is where young people begin to understand themselves, not in theory, but through real, lived experience.

In a world that often feels structured and predictable, these moments of challenge, uncertainty, and growth remain some of the most valuable lessons we can offer.

Billy Teeton



QuadFest

Our annual QuadFest was a truly memorable evening filled with vibrant music and uplifting entertainment. Our wonderfully talented musicians captivated the audience with their performances, showcasing both passion and skill. The atmosphere was electric, with guests thoroughly enjoying every moment of the program.

Where
words
fail,
music
speaks

- Hans Christian Andersen



A highlight of the evening was the auction, which proved to be a great success, raising an impressive R8450 in support of Mihalali House.

It was a night of community spirit,
generosity, and celebration that will be
fondly remembered. . .

Sheree Ferreira





Woodridge Matric Dance

-A Celebration of Friendship



The annual Woodridge Matric Dance was once again a memorable and joyful occasion, bringing together the Class of 2026 for an evening of celebration, reflection, and shared laughter.

For many of the matrics, the evening marked a special milestone in their final year at school. It was a moment to pause and look back on the journey that has shaped them, from their early days as younger students finding their place at Woodridge, to the confident young adults they are today. The Dance provided the perfect setting for these reflections, surrounded by classmates who have walked the same path and shared so many of the experiences that define school life.



As the students arrived, dressed elegantly for the occasion, there was an unmistakable sense of excitement and anticipation. The atmosphere was filled with smiles, photographs, and warm greetings as friends gathered together, celebrating not only the evening itself but the friendships that have grown over many years.

The Matric Dance has always been more than just a formal event on the calendar. It represents a celebration of the relationships that have developed within the year group, friendships formed in classrooms, on sports fields, during camps, and through the many shared experiences that make up life at Woodridge. These connections, built over time, were clearly visible throughout the evening as students enjoyed the company of those who have become such an important part of their lives.



As the night unfolded, the dance floor quickly became the heart of the celebration. Laughter, music, and energy filled the room as the matrics danced the night away, enjoying every moment of an occasion that will remain a treasured memory of their final year at school.

What stood out most during the evening was the spirit of togetherness. There was a genuine sense of appreciation among the students for the journey they had shared and the friendships that had supported them along the way. These bonds, formed during their time at Woodridge, are likely to remain long after their school years have come to an end.



The Matric Dance was truly a wonderful evening – one filled with joy, celebration, and reflection. As the Class of 2026 continues through their final year, the memories created on this special night will undoubtedly remain a meaningful part of their Woodridge story.

A special thank you to the organising committee for all their time and commitment to making the evening a special and memorable moment. Also, a big thank you to our grade 11's who worked tirelessly through the evening.

[Click on this Link to see the rest of the pictures](#)



* Interhouse Plays 2026 'Slime & Punishment' *

Last week, performers from each House bravely trod the boards in the Inter-House plays. This year, we made use of a 'Starter' play format. The beginning and end tableau of a play was written by our Head of Dramatic Arts, Caren Bestbier. Each House was tasked with completing the writing of their own play, maintaining continuity with the original plot line, characters and their relationships.

Our adjudicator this year was Miss Sarah Sharp, a recent graduate from UCT, who achieved her Honours in Film with a specialisation in Screenwriting. Her valuable feedback was appreciated by all.



The winners for this year were:

Best Cameo Performance - Sike Mavakala
 Best Supporting Actor - Nicholas Ras
 Best Supporting Actress - Zanele Mfuleni
 Best Actor - Konwaba Qeqe
 Best Actress - Mia Holme
 Best Script - Carter House
 Best Director - Carter House
 Best Play - Kohler House

As always, the Interhouse Plays were an exhibition of the amazing talent we have in our College. It was great to see a wide range of pupils on stage from all grades. These plays were a culmination of many hours of hard work, and this was visible in the final product. A shout out also needs to go to the group of staff who also braved the stage and put together a very humorous performance.

**The mission of the theatre, after all, is
 to change, to raise the consciousness of
 people to their human possibilities."**

– Arthur Miller



Summer Sport Season Reflection

By Yaldren Vickery

The first term is always a busy one. Everyone comes back from the December holidays full of energy, and we get straight into the swing of things. Within the first two weeks, we held our Interhouse Athletics Meeting, which is always a favourite on the calendar. The cooler weather made the day even more enjoyable, and it was great to see so many pupils from Kohler, Carter, and Founders taking part with real enthusiasm. Days like this show the true strength of our sport pupils getting involved, supporting one another, and showing real pride in their houses.

Soon after, we hosted our first-ever evening Interhouse Swimming Gala. Even with a bit of rain, it turned out to be a fantastic event. The swimmers gave their best, the atmosphere around the pool was full of excitement, and those who couldn't make it really missed something special.

Water polo has also had a full and exciting term, with more than ten festivals across boys' and girls' teams. It has been wonderful to watch our teams grow tougher and more confident each season. Playing strong opponents week after week has helped them improve, both mentally and physically.

Our cricket programme has also continued to develop well. The players are starting to believe in themselves more, and the progress is clear. Girls' cricket remains a major strength, highlighted by excellent performances and a healthy number of matches for both teams.

This term, we also welcomed three experienced coaches to our staff: Lutho Pohlongo as Cricket Consultant, Lusanda Badiyana as Rugby Consultant, and Jason Syce as Head of Hockey. They bring valuable experience, and we are excited to see the positive impact they will have on our players.

Our tennis program continues to go from strength to strength, achieving excellent results. As we move into the winter sports season, I want to encourage all our sportsmen and sportswomen to keep pushing themselves and to stay committed to their teams and teammates.

Team sports teach so many important lessons, such as how to communicate, take responsibility, be accountable, and stay committed even when things get tough. These lessons stay with you for life.



Past Pupil's Generosity Empowers Eco-Committee Members

Past pupil Oscar Deseta generously sponsored ten years' worth of African Snakebite Institute (ASI) Snake Handling Courses for deserving members of the Woodridge Eco-Committee who have shown a strong commitment to the environment.

Recently, the ASI team visited Port Elizabeth/Gqeberha, providing an opportunity for three of our Eco-Committee members to participate.

Congratulations to Bella Watson, Hayden Lues, and Janno Kruger on successfully completing their Level One Certified Snake Handling and First Aid for Snakebite Course.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Oscar for his generosity and for inspiring Woodridge students to deepen their understanding of the natural world while developing valuable environmental awareness and safety skills.



Equestrian pursuits & successes

Our riders recently participated in a very wet Western Mounted Games qualifiers at Polocrosse.

Michaela Wedderburn achieved three Level 2 times, with Maya-Faye Maxwell winning the SANESA High School Level 0 class. Our Grade 8 beginner riders participated in the SANESA Eastern Cape Mounted Archery Qualifier 1 in the Level 0 category. Ava Duxbury was placed 1st, followed by

Lila Kaarse and Devin Rodmell in 2nd and 3rd, respectively. In the Level 1 category of the Mounted Archery Raid class, Kaitlyn Bellingham placed 1st with Gabi Neethling coming in 3rd.

Michela Weddeburn recently played at the Polocrosse Challenge. Her team did exceptionally well, winning the B Division. Michela was instrumental in her team's success.



Our Mountain Bikers recently travelled to Graaff-Reinet to compete in Race 1 of the Eastern Cape Schools Mountain Bike Series, facing tough competition and challenging conditions.

In the Young Men A section, Blake Roomer secured an impressive 5th position, with Matthew Venter close behind in 6th – a promising and confident start to the season for two talented young riders.

In the Youth Men B section, Scott Davidson also delivered a strong performance to finish 5th, while Ruark Kotze followed with a commendable 7th place.

All our riders showed great determination and resilience,

particularly as they competed in extremely hot and demanding conditions.

The team then went on to participate in the "Bay by Bike" Mountain Bike race in Gqeberha, where they faced a technically challenging course. Riders took on either the 40km or 20km distances, pushing themselves both physically and mentally.

It was encouraging to see our cyclists continue to grow in confidence and endurance as they tackle longer and more demanding races.

Their commitment, perseverance, and positive attitude are clear indicators of the progress they are making this season.



Netballers Show Grit and Growth in Tough Early-Season Fixtures

The netball season has started in all earnest. Our players travelled to Makhanda for their first fixtures of the season against DSG. This is always a hard fixture, and the girls must be commended for their positive attitude and energy through all the games.

The U16A and U14A teams then travelled to Paarl this past weekend.

Participating in the very tough Paarl Girls High Festival, the girls used this time to gain some invaluable experience against some of the top teams in the Western Cape. The results did not always go our way, but the determination and grit the girls showed will go a long way in their development through the course of a long season ahead.



RUGBY TEAMS RISE TO THE CHALLENGE IN ACTION—PACKED START TO THE SEASON

15

The rugby season has gotten off to a frenetic start with our teams playing against very hard Despatch High sides. The U14, U15 and U16 sides all managed good wins, with the 1st and 2nd Teams going down. The 1st Team game was a cracker with both teams throwing everything at each other. The game was a good learning experience for our boys.



The Woodridge teams then Travelled to Makhanda for the Graeme College Festival. All our teams played against Mary Waters High and again produced some very pleasing results. The 1st, U16 and U15 Teams all recorded good wins, with the U14 Team struggling against some very speedy players, eventually going down.



The Hockey Season Begins, with growth, grit, and determination

The Hockey season has started with a bang, with the 1st boys and girls sides traveling to East London for the Greg Beiling and Tony Godding Festival. The Girls won 2 of their 4 games, with the boys managing a win and a draw in their 4 games. This was a very pleasing start to the season against some quality teams. The rest of the girls' teams travelled to Makhanda to start the season with games against DSG. The teams all struggled as these were the first matches they were playing against teams who already had a few under their belts. All in all, the fixture was a good learning experience, and we look forward to a busy season ahead.

This past weekend the U16A & B Teams played in the U16 Investec Pearson Tournament. The B Team won one, drew 2 and lost one game in the pool stages. In the play-off games they came up against Nico Malan and won 2 – 1 finishing 9th overall. The A Team topped their pool stage and beat Victoria Park in the quarterfinals. In the semi-finals they came up against DSG and went down 1 – 2 in a cracker of a game. In the 3rd/4th play-off game they went down to Somerset West ending in 4th position. These teams are growing in confidence and continue to show considerable grit when the chips are down.



Chess news

Several weeks ago, Deacon Dugmore participated in the Eastern Province Chess Trials Tournament for 2026.

He did exceptionally well to win the Gold Medal in the U18 Section, an excellent performance from someone who is only 15 years of age.

This well-deserved win also earned Deacon the title of Arena Candidate Master. We wish Deacon all the best as he travels to Rustenburg during the holiday for the prestigious SA Junior Closed Chess Tournament.



Open water swimming news

Shalea Hamilton recently participated in the SA National Open Water Champs.

She achieved outstanding results, getting the gold medal in the 3km open water swim for the 14 – 15-year-old category, thus becoming the South African Age Group Champion. She was also part of the 4 x 1km Mixed Medley, which also won gold.

Shalea then participated in the 5km open water race for 15-16-year-olds, managing a very good 7th Place. These results make her eligible for SA selection for the Junior World Champs later in the year.



Provincial Indoor Cricket

Ashley Pietersen and Austin Botes were recently selected to represent Eastern Province Indoor Cricket, a fantastic and well-deserved achievement for both players. Their selection is a testament to the hard work and dedication they have shown throughout the season.

What makes this accomplishment even more special is that both Ashley and Austin have been entrusted with leadership roles, having been named captains of their respective teams. This honour not only recognises their skill, but also their character, commitment, and ability to inspire those around them. We congratulate them on this outstanding milestone and wish them every success.



Squash Success

Gabrielle Rowe competed in the Londt Park Open 2026 this past week, shortly after returning from a demanding hockey tour, and delivered an outstanding performance on court.

Showing great determination and skill, she went on to win the Ladies B Section. This is an impressive achievement on its own, made even more meaningful by the fact that she claimed the Ladies C Section title at the same tournament last year. Her back-to-back success is a testament to her hard work, resilience, and steady improvement, and highlights the remarkable progress she continues to make in her sport.



Exploring the campus



Learning about the new



Class of 1976

A Golden Reunion

Recently we had the honour of welcoming back the Matric Class of 1976 as they gathered to celebrate their 50-year reunion. For some, this was their first visit back to the campus in half a century, which made this a monumental occasion filled with nostalgia, laughter, and reflection.

As they walked through the grounds once again, it was clear that much had changed since their school days. New buildings stand where open spaces once were, facilities have expanded, and the school has evolved to meet the needs of a new generation of adolescents. Yet despite these physical changes, there was a shared feeling among the visitors that something deeply familiar remained. The spirit of Woodridge, its authenticity, sense of community, and connection to the natural surroundings, continues to endure.

Throughout the weekend, stories flowed easily. Old friendships were rekindled as classmates recalled moments from their school years: the competitive interhouse events, the challenges of boarding life, the adventures that came with growing up in the unique Woodridge environment, and the teachers who shaped their journeys. For some, it was remarkable to realise that while fifty years had passed, the bonds formed during those formative years still felt immediate and strong.

Perhaps the most special part of the reunion was the sense of continuity between past and present. The men who once walked these paths as boys could see the same spirit alive in the current generation of Woodridge pupils. While the buildings may look different, the heart of the school remains unchanged.

The reunion served as a powerful reminder that Woodridge is more than a place; it is a lifelong connection. For the Matric Class of 1976, returning to campus after fifty years was not simply a visit back to where they once studied — it was a return to a place that helped shape who they became. Woodridge was delighted to welcome them home.



TURNING PUDDLES into PARADISE



During a recent heavy downpour on campus, what could easily have been seen as a gloomy, disruptive afternoon quickly turned into a moment of light-hearted joy.

A few of our girls and boys, joined by a staff member, embraced the unexpected conditions and took to sliding down the Academic Quad embankment. Laughter echoed across the campus as they made the most of the rain, turning a wet and muddy slope into an impromptu playground.

It was a simple yet memorable reminder of the spirit of our school community, one that chooses positivity, connection, and joy, even in the most unlikely circumstances. Moments like these highlight the wonderful ability of our pupils to find fun, create memories, and see the brighter side of any situation.

SUPPER, STORIES & SHARED SMILES

Starck House recently continued one of its most cherished traditions, celebrating the birthdays of all boarders born in January, February, and March.

This termly gathering has become a highlight in the boarding calendar, bringing together staff and students in a warm, relaxed setting filled with laughter, cake, and a strong sense of belonging.

In a space that already feels like a second home, these celebrations add an extra layer of care and connection, ensuring that each boarder feels seen and valued on their special day.



It's moments like these that truly capture the spirit of Starck House, where community, kindness, and shared experiences turn boarding into something far more meaningful than just a place to stay.



IEB Markers

The strength of any school is determined by the teachers who guide and nurture the pupils in their care. At the end of last year, 18 of our staff were selected to be examiners, sub-examiners, or markers for the IEB Matric papers. This is a significant number of staff from a relatively small school.



The benefits for our College, having so many staff as part of the IEB team, are that we remain relevant in the subjects we offer, giving our matrices the bonus of teachers who have access to the way markers are going about their business and what they are looking for when our matrices write IEB papers.

Farewell to Mrs Anneliese van Niekerk

The Woodridge College community bids a heartfelt farewell to Mrs Anneliese van Niekerk, our Head of Mathematics. She retires at the end of this week, and while we say goodbye with a sense of sadness, it is equally a moment of deep gratitude for the lasting impact she has had on our school.

Mrs van Niekerk's contribution extends far beyond the Mathematics classroom. As a teacher, she had a remarkable ability to bring clarity to complexity, guiding her pupils through challenging concepts with patience and insight. More importantly, she understood that teaching



Mathematics was never just about numbers; it was about developing people. Through her work, she instilled perseverance when answers were not easily found, resilience in the face of mistakes, and the confidence for her pupils to believe in their own abilities.

Her influence was not limited to academics. A passionate sportswoman, Mrs van Niekerk played an active role on the hockey field and in the water polo pool, modelling commitment, teamwork, and integrity. In true Woodridge spirit, she also embraced the outdoors, completing The Way on several occasions, a testament to her resilience, courage, and adventurous nature.

Over many years, Mrs van Niekerk has been a true Woodridge stalwart. She has shaped minds, inspired colleagues, and contributed meaningfully to the tone and culture of the school. Her steady presence, wisdom, and leadership will leave a significant gap within our community.

As she steps into this next chapter, we celebrate the opportunities that lie ahead. With more time to pursue her passions, from motorbike riding to mountain biking, we do not doubt that she will approach this new season of life with the same energy and enthusiasm that she brought to Woodridge.

We extend our sincere thanks to Mrs van Niekerk for her dedication, her passion, and the profound difference she has made in the lives of so many. She leaves with the respect, admiration, and gratitude of the entire Woodridge community. She will be deeply missed, but her legacy will continue to be felt for years to come.

The Writers College: Caren Bestbier

Recently, Mrs Caren Bestbier, our Head of Drama, entered the 2026 Creative Writing Challenge in the Rising Star category.

Her written piece, "One for the Road," did exceptionally well and put her in 2nd place in the category.

This is a remarkable achievement, and we commend Mrs Bestbier on this. It is always pleasing to see staff grow their talents.



Welcome Baby Syce

It is with great joy that we welcome baby Colby Syce to the world!

Born on 12 March 2026, and weighing a precious 2.5 kg, Colby arrives as a beautiful new addition to a growing and loving Syce family. We congratulate Jason and Demi on the arrival of their son.

The arrival of a new baby is always a moment filled with wonder, hope, and deep gratitude, and this little life brings with it the promise of many joyful memories still to come.



May Colby's days be filled with warmth, love, and laughter as the family begins this special new chapter together.

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you are working for the Lord, not for human masters." - Colossians 3:23



Wednesday: 29 April, School Commences

- We ask that all pupils return neatly attired in their Number 1's.
- The boys need to ensure that their hair is cut and styled according to the guidelines in the code of conduct.
- Boarders who catch flights into Port Elizabeth must be dressed in their 'Number 1s'.



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

