

# RHENISH GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

*The Oldest Girls' School in South Africa*

**Principal: Ms E H Slabber**

**18 August 2021**

Dear Grade 12 Parents and Learners

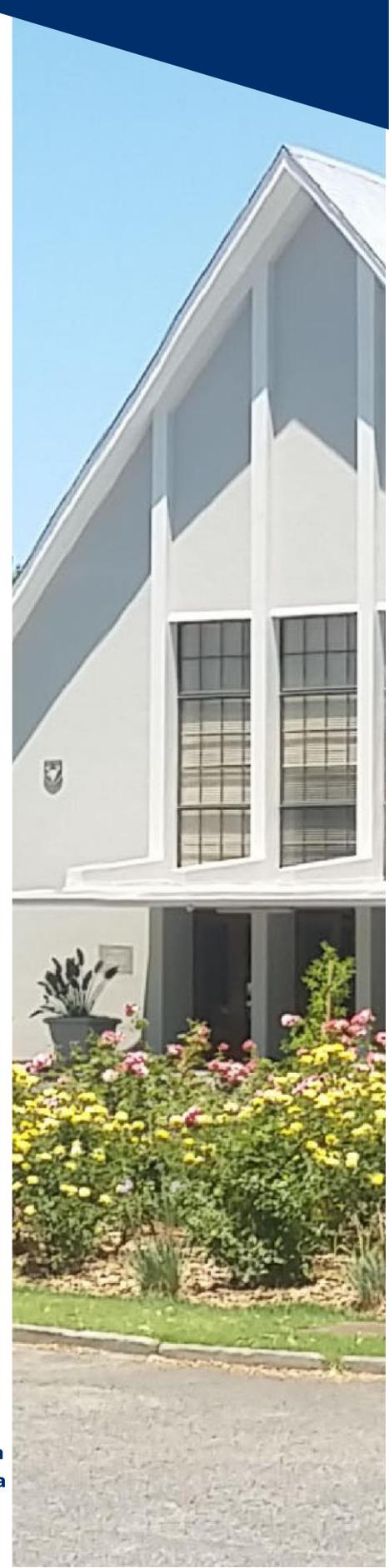
## **Prelim Exams: Timetable, Arrangements and Planning**

There has been some frustration among learners and parents regarding the delay in the release of the Prelim timetable. Let me unpack our own frustration behind this delay:

You are aware of the buzz in the media around talk of doing away with the scheduled school break in October and teaching through to the final exams. Briefly, it is being speculated that the 5 days from 4 - 8 October 2021 must be utilized to compensate for the school days lost because of the early closure and delayed reopening of school for this term. The third and fourth terms will then be separated by a long weekend by declaring 23 September 2021 as a school holiday. This decision has not been finalized and the unions are involved with negotiations with the Department of Basic Education (DBE). We can simply not wait any longer for the DBE to make this decision. We need to make a decision now in the best interest of our Grade 12s; we cannot allow for this group to have their Prelims disrupted as the mid year Test Series was. It would be unfair on the learners and the staff.

**Our decision: It is important to note that, even if the DBE changes the dates, the Prelim timetable will remain as it is.** While the rest of the school may be off on 23 September, the Grade 12s will write the exam scheduled for that day. The Grade 12 Prelims will finish on 1 October and, if the DBE does make the speculated change to the calendar, the Grade 12s will be given the day off school on Monday 4 October.

With barely a moment to breathe, Term 2 reports have been digested and our focus turns to the Prelim Exams. Named 'preliminary exams', these exams do exactly as the name suggests – it is the final round of preparatory exams before the NSC exams in November. They function to fine tune exam skills, they mimic the finals in form and content and they ensure that our girls may enter the National Senior Certificate exam room confident that Rhenish Girls' High has prepared them for that moment.



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Accompanying this letter is the timetable for the Prelim Exams. We understand that no time table will suit every learner optimally. It may also seem quite intense with many subjects being written in a very short period of time. Please understand that every effort has been made to make the timetable as fair as possible.

There are a multitude of subject combinations at Rhenish Girls' High and this impacts on the combination of subjects that it is possible to write on a day.

With the havoc that Covid has played on the Term Calendar with shortened terms and lengthened holidays, it is also essential that as much teaching time is accommodated BEFORE the Prelim Exams as possible so that teachers can complete the curriculum. Even starting when we do, there are some subjects which will only fully complete the curriculum after the conclusion of the Prelims. We will therefore write over a shorter period, and on one instance, the girls will even write on a Saturday.

The Prelim Exam is a vital element in your daughter's preparation for the final NSC Exam. No learner will write online from home. All exams, as in the finals, must be written at school. If a learner cannot write an exam, the school has to be informed before 8:00 on the day of the exam and a doctor's note has to be submitted. Failing to do will result in the candidate being awarded a zero for the exam missed. It is therefore vital that she nurtures her health over the next couple of weeks, if not months. It is completely understandable that our learners are desperate to socialize, to be with their friends, to shake off the stresses of school, study and Covid, but I urge you and the learners to tread cautiously. It is all about short term sacrifices for long term rewards. It is far more prudent to keep your bubble tight for a little while and then, once finals are over, she can relax knowing that that chapter is closed and she can look forward to the future without the threat of rewrites hanging over her.

Please be supportive and encouraging – both of your daughters and of her teachers – we will all get to the finish line together.

Yours sincerely



**Ms E H Slabber**

**Principal**