



NEWSLETTER

End of Term 1

They say time flies when you are having fun and I have never felt more familiar to a cliched phrase. The past ten weeks have been a whirlwind of new faces, names and families to bond with. Thank you again to all the Aurorian's for making me feel so welcome and I am now officially part of the furniture.

I am looking forward to term two as we have spiced up some of the regular activities to create a love for learning and encourage bonding.

A few things to look forward to:

- APT Raffle
- Father's afternoon
- Reptile show
- Date night
- Parents Talk – empowering our parents
- Grade R sports day
- Pajama day and more. . .

As the term comes to an end, I would like to give a special thanks to all the Castle staff on a great term! The teachers, your enthusiasm is contagious, the co-teachers your support and dedication is so appreciated. To the cleaning staff, you have your hands full without a moan or groan. Godfrey your abundance of joy for your job is so infectious and Rowena, you light up our day, every day!

My favourite part of each day is the excitement I receive from the Castle children, their warm hugs and words of affection make being the Head of a busy Castle worth every minute!



Important information for the last week of term

Parent / Teacher Consultations – 12 and 13 March

- Please book your time slot with your teacher
- 15 minutes per consultation – please be punctual and stick to the allotted time
- Reports will be handed out during the consultation.

APT Movie night

- 13 March – 17:30 – 20:30 (Movie will start at 18:30)
- Galaxy Field
- R30 per ticket – children under 6 are free. Tickets available at the Castle reception.

See info below

Grandparents day

- 15 March – 08:30 – 09:30
- Please send a photo or printed picture of your child's grandparent or special person by Tuesday the very latest. (Even if your child's grandparent is not with us anymore or is unable to attend)
- Please notify your class teacher if your child can go home with their grandparents.

See info below

Extra -murals and Grade R activity sessions

- There will be no Grade R activities during the last week of school. The Grade R children can be collected at 13:00, they will be in their classrooms until 14:00
- No Extra-murals on Friday 15 March

Break up day

- 15 March
- Many of our children will be going home with their grandparents, the remaining children will have a relaxed day with their teachers.
- **Aftercare will commence at 13:00**

Holiday care

- 18 March – 1 April
- 21 March – Public Holiday - 22 March – school is closed
- **Holiday care is run on a skeleton staff**

Term 2

- Term 2 commences on the 2 April 2019



Grandparents Day

On the 15 March we will be hosting one of our favourite events of the year. Our Grandparents are invited to spend the morning at the Castle to get a glimpse into their grandchild's day. Please notify your parents or that 'special' person in your child's life.

The morning will commence at 08:30 as this will give your children some time to settle in with their teacher before a busy morning. Please notify all grandparents to only go up to the class at 08:30. (the morning is planned to end at 09:30)

The children will have fun partaking in a little activity and then enjoy an outdoors picnic.

What do the grandparents or 'special' people need to know:

Parking before 8am can be rather hectic, be prepared and let them know where they can find the Castle – the security staff will also assist.

Pack a picnic basket and blanket – remember sugar-free and nut free snacks

Please notify your class teacher if your little one will be going home with their grandparent.

Please send a printed picture of your child's grandparent or 'special' person to school before Tuesday 12 March.

(Even Grandparents who are no longer with us or who cannot join on the day)

Grandparents' Day

We invite all grandparents to come and spend a special morning with us.

Date: Friday, 15 March 2019
Time: 08:30 – 09:30
Venue: Curro Castle Aurora
(please use the Puttick Road parking area)

Kindly note that the Castle is a nut- and sugar-free zone.

Bring along a blanket and a picnic basket to share with your grandchild.

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BACK TO THE FUTURE

Join us for a fun screening of
Back to the Future,
hosted by the
Association of Parents and Teachers (APT).

Date: Wednesday, 13 March 2019

Time: 17:30 for 18:30 (movie ends at 20:30)

Venue: Galaxy Field

Tickets: R30 per person (free for children under 6)

Parking: R10

- Tickets will be available from the Castle reception and main reception from Wednesday, 6 March 2019.
- No food and drinks may be brought in. Food stalls will be available.
- You are welcome to bring picnic blankets, pillows and camping chairs.

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Holidays

Before over planning your child's holiday schedule, I would like you to take into consideration how important down time is for children, how boredom ignites initiative and how the brain needs a break

My article of the week:

The Benefits of Downtime: Why Learners' Brains Need a Break

Going Offline

The idea that the brain might be productively engaged during downtime has been slow in coming. Because of the brain's massive energy consumption—using as much as 20% of the body's energy intake while on-task—most scientists expected that the organ would default to a frugal, energy-saving mode when given the chance.

Recently, however, brain researchers have discovered sets of scattered brain regions that fire in a synchronized way when people switch to a state of mental rest, such as daydreaming. These “resting-state networks” help us process our experience, consolidate memories, reinforce learning, regulate our attention and emotions, keep us productive and effective in our work and judgment, and more.

The best understood of these networks is the Default Mode Network, or DMN. It's the part of the brain that chatters on continuously when we're off-task—ruminating on a conversation that didn't go as well as we'd hoped, for example, or flipping through our mental to-do list, or nagging us about how we've treated a friend.

Many of us are culturally conditioned to think of time off-task as “wasted” and a sign of inefficiency or laziness. But teachers and learners can benefit from recognizing how downtime can help. In addition to giving the brain an opportunity to make sense of what it has just learned, shifting off-task can help learners refresh their minds when frustrated so they can return to a problem and focus better.

The Productive Faces of Idleness

SLEEP

Sleep is the quintessential form of downtime for the brain. All animals sleep in some form, and even plants and microorganisms often have dormant or inactive states. Sleep has been shown in numerous studies to play a major role in memory formation and consolidation.

Recent studies have shown that when the human brain flips to idle mode, the neurons that work so hard when we're on-task settle down and the surrounding glial cells increase their activity dramatically, cleaning up the waste products accumulated by the neurons and moving them out via the body's lymphatic system. Researchers believe that the restorative effects of sleep are due to this cleansing mechanism. Napping for 10-30 minutes has been demonstrated to increase alertness and improve performance.

Teachers might consider reminding parents of the importance of adequate sleep for learning in the classroom – especially if learners are visibly sleepy or have noticeable difficulty focusing in class. As many as 30% of K-12 learners don't get enough sleep at night.



AWAKE, DOING NOTHING

Idleness is often considered a vice, but there's growing evidence that there are benefits to "doing nothing." Electrical activity in the brain that appears to solidify certain kinds of memories is more frequent during downtime—as when lying in the dark at bedtime—than it is during sleep.

Meditation is another way of giving the brain a break from work without fully surrendering consciousness. Research has shown that meditation can refresh our ability to concentrate, help us attend to tasks more efficiently, and strengthen connections between regions of the DMN.

Experienced meditators typically perform better than non-meditators on difficult attention tests, and may be able to toggle more easily between the DMN and those brain networks that we use when we're actively on task.

There's evidence as well that the brain benefits from going offline for even the briefest moments—as when we blink. Every time we blink, our DMN fires up and our conscious networks take respite for a moment, giving the conscious mind a bit of relief.

Some schools are taking note and introducing meditation into the classroom. Getting the buy-in needed to launch a meditation program takes work, but benefits can be substantial.

MUNDANE ACTIVITY

It's not uncommon to experience a sudden flash of insight while engaged in mundane activities like doing a crossword puzzle or cleaning the house. There's a famous anecdote about Archimedes, a prominent scientist in classical Greece, solving a problem in just this way.

Archimedes needed to determine whether the king's new crown was made entirely of the gold supplied to the goldsmith, or whether inferior metals like silver had been mixed in—and he had to do it without damaging the crown. He puzzled over how to solve the problem, without luck. Then, as he stepped into a bathtub one day and saw the water level rise, he realized in an instant that he could use the water's buoyancy to measure the density of the crown against a solid gold reference sample. He conducted the experiment and found that the crown was less dense than the gold sample, implicating the goldsmith in fraud.

Scientists who research "unconscious thought" have found that activities that distract the conscious mind without taxing the brain seem to give people greater insight into complex problems. In a study of students who were asked to determine which car would be the best purchase, for instance, the group that spent their decision-making time solving an unrelated puzzle made better choices than the group that deliberated over the information for four minutes.

Brief windows of time spent on routine, mundane activities in the classroom—like feeding the class pet, putting books back on a bookshelf, or rearranging desks—can give learners a much-needed break from the sustained concentration required for academic time on-task.



Standing Up for Downtime

With so much to do and so little learning time in a school year—fitting in downtime is easier said than done. But take heart. Even closing your eyes, taking one deep breath, and exhaling can help to refresh the brain and takes practically no time. Offering more downtime in moment-sized bites might be just the thing for keeping ourselves, our students and our children on schedule and giving our brains that little bit of freedom to turn off for just a minute.

Holiday breaks and vacations are a perfect time for all of us take a break. I'll be finding some time to unplug, unwind, and turn off. Will you?

<https://www.scilearn.com/blog/benefits-downtime-why-learners%20need-break>

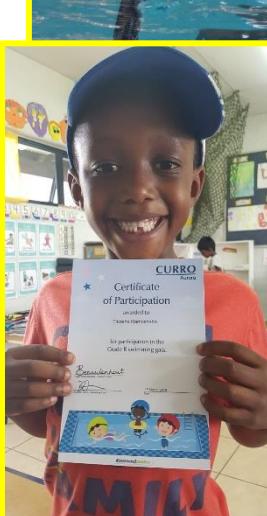
Outstanding achievement



Layla in the Lorax class participated in the Talent Africa regional auditions in the modern dance category. She qualifies to go through to the national competition at the end of March.

Well done Layla, we are proud of you!

Congratulations to all the Grade R swimmers who participated in the gala week. The energy and excitement in the aquatic center was incredible. You are all super stars!



Reminders:



Have a wonderful break and if you are travelling, please go safely!

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