

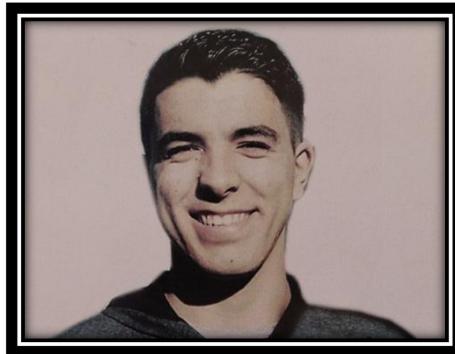


Headmaster / Skoolhoof: David Schenck

Dear Parents and friends of Parel Vallei

By the time this letter is released I will be in Holland with the school's hockey tour hopefully enjoying some good hockey, cooler weather, waffles and Belgian beer! 😊

But...I need to start on a sad note and stop for a moment to remember Claudio Mendes. He will forever be a Parel Valleier. Rest in Peace young man!



It has been somewhat of a tumultuous term with the drought taking centre stage and all the collateral damage giving us headaches. The cancellation of Inter-schools and sports matches was very sad but we understand it all in the bigger picture of saving water and preserving deteriorating playing surfaces. Thank you for your help in saving water by embracing the uniform concessions granted AND for ensuring that the children remained neat and tidy in their sports clothes.

We are thankful for the rain showers that we have received but we pray for abundant rain in our season as it approaches. The best time to save water is when there is a great deal of it! Let's work together to make sure this never happens again.

I like to use my termly letter to address issues that weigh heavily on my heart in the hope that it reaches as many people as possible and stimulates debate. This letter is called:

***Dear Parent,***

***Are you a helicopter or a lawnmower?***

There comes a time in a child's life when they have to learn to stand on their own two feet. The following story holds a truth that is very difficult for many parents to put into practice and as a result there is often conflict between the school, the child and the parent.

*“A man found a cocoon of an emperor moth. He took it home so that he could watch the moth come out of the cocoon. On the day that a small opening appeared, he sat and watched the moth for several hours as the moth struggled to force the body through that little hole.*

*The moth seemed to be stuck and appeared to have stopped making progress. It seemed as if it had gotten as far as it could and it could go no farther. The man, in his kindness, decided to help the moth; so he took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The moth then emerged easily. But its body was swollen and small, its wings wrinkled and shrivelled. The man continued to watch the moth because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand and be able to support the body, which would contract in time. Neither happened! In fact, the little moth spent the rest of its life crawling around with a small, swollen body and shrivelled wings. It was never able to fly. The man in his kindness and haste did not understand that the struggle required for the moth to get through the tiny opening was necessary to force fluid from the body of the moth into its wings so that it would be ready for flight upon achieving its freedom from the cocoon. Freedom and flight would only come after the struggle. By depriving the moth of a struggle, he deprived the moth of health.*

*Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If we were to go through our life without any obstacles, we would be crippled. We would not be as strong as what we could have been. Give every opportunity a chance, leave no room for regrets, and don't forget the power in the struggle.”*

*Author unknown*

Our children are special beyond words and it is our greatest fear that they grow up and amount to nothing worthy of our dreams and aspirations. We make decisions that we feel are in the best interests of the child, in order to make certain that our child gets only the very best and is undoubtedly destined for recognition and success. I would like to suggest that sometimes we think we are doing the right thing but we end up doing something that denies the child the opportunity for growth and teaches the wrong lesson. We step in when we should have stepped back and allowed the child the chance to address the issue while we support quietly from behind.

We must remember to support **what** is right rather than **who** is right. Emotions get in the way, clouding the room and obscuring concepts such as responsibility and

accountability, feeding off a notion of “I must protect my child at all costs.” The result is inevitably confrontational in nature between the parents and the school, while the child (who should be learning from the experience) sits on the periphery watching the show. We are creating a generation of future adults who remain dependent on others and are unable to fend for themselves, constantly blaming others because they do not know what it means to take ownership of their issues and address them.

So what is the helicopter and/or lawnmower parent?

They are variations on a theme that describes people who constantly step in when they should step back. I am not saying that we must always step back – there are times when we must report issues and deal with them as responsible parents. The trick is to work out when to step in!

The helicopter parent hovers above the child keeping an eye open for danger and then swooping down to deal with things. The lawnmower parent goes out in front clearing a path so progress is easy. In both instances the child does not learn how to deal with issues outside their comfort zone but instead learns to challenge authority in the wrong way or not at all.

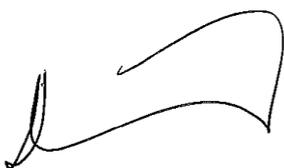
Parel Vallei is blessed with a wealth of educational experience tasked with not only teaching book knowledge but also developing the leaders of the future. The whole development of the child is central to success post school and we, as parents, need to step back more often and allow our children to experience the struggles of life in order to grow. South Africa is in desperate need of leaders made from “The Right Stuff” and it is our responsibility to work together as a village to raise our children to take up their rightful place in society and make a difference. High School is the cocoon from which our young moths must emerge to face the world – let’s give them the chance to forge their own path and let us NOT pick up the scissors (too easily) and snip the strands that sometimes hold them back. This kind of struggle is indeed constructive because it teaches lessons for life.

On matters more mundane please note the following:

- PV uniform is to be worn on the campus at all times including weekends.
- Only white socks to be worn with sports kit unless the match kit is different.
- The winter season is upon us and I would like to encourage children and parents to come and support all school activities.
- Please avoid missing tests and exams at all costs. The policy regarding this is on the back of the termly test time table.

I would like to wish you a Blessed Easter and an enjoyable holiday. Safe travels to all, especially our staff and 1<sup>st</sup> team hockey players (pictured below, pg. 4) going to Holland.

Warm PV greetings

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'David', written in a cursive style.

David

