

HISTORY, HERITAGE *and the path ahead*

Recently news articles have referred to the significant proposed changes to South Africa's history curriculum. South Africa's draft revised History Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) proposes a significant shift in how history is taught from Grades 4 to 12, with a stronger emphasis on African and South African perspectives.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) says the revised curriculum is designed to prioritise historical enquiry, evidence, interpretation and critical engagement, rather than rote memorisation of facts. Public response has been strong, mixed and highly engaged.

The DBE has emphasised that the draft is still open for public comment and that feedback will help shape the final version.

Speaking of history, as Domino Servite celebrates 40 years, the history of our school is both impossible to forget and can never be erased or diminished.

The school is rooted in the very tenets of the work established at KwaSizabantu mission with its focus on Christian teaching, personal moral transformation, obedience to biblical principles and spiritual revival.

What we have cherished and learned from our past does more than live in memory; it continues to guide our present and will chart our future.

In addition to our legacy, our commitment to academic excellence remains steadfast and resolute. We will continue to work towards recognising the innate potential in each learner and thereafter do our best to help the learner develop his potential.

South Africa is in desperate need of responsible citizens who actively serve our communities with



integrity and compassion. This also remains a vital part of our mission - to equip these future citizens.

As we remember 40 years, we do so with immense gratitude. Thank you parents for walking this journey with us. We look forward to the next chapter trusting that it will be as memorable as the past chapters.

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Food for thought

WHAT WE EAT MATTERS

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On 29 April 2026 Domino Servite School observed *Stop Food Waste Day*.

More than 10 major international food-related days are observed each year, including World Food Day and World Hunger Day.

These days remind us of both the privilege many of us enjoy and of the reality, reported by the *Daily Maverick*, that nearly 11 000 South African children die annually due to **h u n g e r** and malnutrition.

These days also serve as a reminder that food forms an integral part of our daily lives.

Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are.

Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, pioneer of gastronomy

Although, for most of us, eating is primarily about survival rather than what Brillat-Savarin viewed as an art and a science of enjoyment, the food we eat still plays an important role in our lives and in the lives of our children.

According to an Indian study conducted by Rajan *et al.* (2024), nutritional practices have a significant impact on academic performance among schoolchildren and improved dietary habits can enhance cognitive function and academic outcomes.

This does not mean that eating healthier food will suddenly turn D symbols into As. It does mean though that teaching our children to eat well can help them concentrate better, learn more effectively and remember

more. Cutting back on fizzy drinks, junk food, chips and sweets is a good place to start. While an apple a day may not keep the doctor away, regular fruit and vegetables help keep children healthy, focused and strong.

The bottom line is simple. When packing goodies for a school excursion, remember to include fruit. When buying term snacks for boarders, add a bag of oranges. On the day of an exam, provide a healthy breakfast.

Perhaps most importantly of all, we should set the example and teach our children that healthy eating has many benefits – not only for their current academic and sporting performance, but also for the years ahead, when what we eat now affects future health.



Do children still need to write homework, class activities and examinations by hand?

We are living in the digital age, where many tools are available that are faster and easier to use. Speech-to-text technology and keyboarding, for example, are often more convenient and more accommodating. Handwriting, by comparison, takes time and is sometimes viewed as unnecessary.

The question remains: do learners still need to write by hand? The answer is yes and there are important reasons why.

FIRST THINGS FIRST *handwriting*

In our pursuit of speed and convenience, how much communication quality have we lost? Handwriting requires individuals to think about what they are writing. Research suggests that writing by hand is a complex process in which the brain and nervous system work together. This process supports the ability to think, remember and communicate clearly. Therefore, when learners are trained to write by hand, they are developing stronger communication skills.

Handwriting is crucial because it encourages creative thinking and strengthens memory. Although digital devices allow for faster writing, they do not provide the

same level of personal expression that comes from drafting and planning ideas by hand. When children write by hand, they make decisions about word choice and structure, allowing their unique voice to emerge.

According to the LWT staff, “writers, designers, scientists, and artists frequently report that their most original ideas emerge when they are writing or sketching by hand.” This type of creativity and innovation is what the modern world needs. When young people are encouraged to think creatively, they may contribute to broader solutions, such as addressing unemployment. Therefore, when writing more by hand, learners

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exercise their brains more effectively, which can lead to the generation of new ideas that benefit society.

Although digital tools offer speed and convenience, handwriting remains an important and valuable skill.

Writing by hand supports deeper thinking, improves memory and allows for meaningful personal expression.

Handwriting should continue to be encouraged as a complementary practice in education to support learners' cognitive and creative development.



How can parents and teachers contribute positively to improve social communication?

- § Use family mealtimes as opportunities to teach table manners and practise taking turns in conversation.
- § When friends visit, encourage cooperation and help children learn to share and interact appropriately.
- § Help children to recognise and understand their own emotions, as well as notice and respond to the emotions of others.
- § Use stories to help children explore different emotions, social situations and appropriate responses.
- § Use pictures of facial expressions and body language to teach children how to recognise how others may be feeling.
- § Role-play a variety of scenarios to familiarise children with different situations and types of people.

The development of social awareness, communication and empathy is essential to shaping children into mature and considerate individuals. Social learning becomes part of teaching children to serve others with integrity and love, honouring God in word and action.

BUILDING SOCIAL SKILLS

through everyday experiences

Have you ever been taken aback by someone's lack of social awareness? You attend an event where certain social norms are expected, yet another attendee seems completely unaware of them and behaves inappropriately without realising it.

This can be especially concerning in adults, but children can be trained to recognise social cues and adapt their behaviour to suit different situations.



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Children may have problems with social communication and interaction if

- § They struggle with personal space and appropriate body language.
- § They fail to follow common social conventions, such as polite greetings or taking turns in conversation.
- § They have difficulty starting, maintaining or ending conversations.
- § They frequently interrupt, speak in a one-sided manner or share excessive personal information.
- § They show limited interest in others' perspectives or empathy with others' feelings.
- § They ask few, inappropriate or unrelated questions.
- § They struggle to interpret facial expressions, tone of voice and other emotional cues.
- § Respond inappropriately to feedback, teasing, disappointment or changes in expectations.

GRATITUDE *more than just manners*

Gratitude is often seen as a simple “thank you”—a polite habit we learn early in life and repeat almost automatically. But science tells a deeper story.

Neuroscience shows that gratitude is not just a social courtesy. It is a powerful mental practice that shapes the brain, enhancing emotional wellbeing, improving cognitive performance and altering how we experience everyday life. When we practice gratitude, several important regions of the brain become active and additional networks tied to motivation, self-awareness and moral reasoning are also engaged. Together, these systems influence how we interpret daily experiences—helping build emotional resilience and a more balanced perspective.



Research suggests that people who regularly practice gratitude may experience increased grey matter volume in the brain which is important because grey matter supports learning, problem-solving and cognitive flexibility. In simple terms, gratitude doesn't just feel good—it may help the brain stay stronger and more adaptable over time.

Stress and anxiety often trigger an overactive amygdala. Gratitude helps regulate this.

Regular gratitude practice has been shown to reduce emotional reactivity, improve stress regulation and support calmer responses to challenges. This creates a more stable emotional baseline, even during difficult moments.

The brain strengthens what it repeats. When we

consistently focus on what is going well, positive neural pathways become stronger, patterns of worry and threat detection begin to weaken and emotional balance improves over time. Gratitude works like a gentle training system for the mind—redirecting attention toward clarity, steadiness and perspective.

Gratitude is more than good manners. It is a small, consistent practice with powerful effects. It can calm emotional responses, improve thinking and focus, reduce stress and build long-term resilience.

Gratitude doesn't have to be complicated. Take a moment each day to notice one thing that went well—no matter how small. Over time, that small shift in attention can lead to a more balanced, steady, and positive way of experiencing life.