



Heather Secondary School
27 Heather Crescent, Northdale

Heather Chronicles

45TH
ANNIVERSARY
EDITION

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heather.org.za



by concord and harmony

Welcome to the first issue of the Heather Chronicles for 2026!

Heather Secondary School enters 2026 at a defining moment — celebrating 45 years of legacy while advancing a renewed commitment to excellence.

Welcome to the first issue of the Heather Chronicles for 2026 — a reflection of a school in motion, building on strong foundations and looking ahead with purpose, unity, and ambition.

This year marks Heather’s 45th anniversary — a remarkable milestone that we will celebrate throughout the year with pride, gratitude, and a deep appreciation for the generations who have shaped our school. Forty-five years of developing minds, building character, and strengthening the community — and we continue to move forward with intent.

The new school year has begun with renewed energy, new faces, and a shared sense of purpose. Whether you are a long-standing member of the Heather family or joining us for the first time, we trust that this edition reflects both the progress we are making and the promise of what lies ahead.

Our Communications Committee continues to play an important role in keeping our community informed and connected. Our website — heather.org.za — continues to grow its daily readership, while our Facebook page, Instagram and TikTok profiles remain vibrant spaces for engagement. If you have not yet connected with us online, we warmly encourage you to do so.

As we celebrate this milestone year, we also invite our alumni, parents, and broader community to be part of rebuilding and strengthening the Heather story. Your contributions — whether in the form of memories, photographs, or ongoing support — are vital as we honour our legacy and shape our future.

We welcome your feedback as we continue to improve how we serve our school community — past, present, and future. Should you have content, achievements, or stories to share, please contact us at community@heather.org.za

Here’s to a memorable 2026 — as we celebrate our past and build, together, the future of Heather Secondary School.

*Heather Chronicles
Crew X*

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A word or two from our Principal

As the 2026 academic year unfolds, I extend a warm welcome to all our new learners, parents, and families. You are now part of the Heather family — a community grounded in shared purpose, mutual respect, and a commitment to excellence under our guiding principle, By Concord and Harmony.

We move through this milestone year on a strong foundation. The Class of 2025 achieved a 97.2% pass rate — our best result since 2009 and 2010. Behind this achievement lies something deeper: the quiet discipline of our learners, the commitment of our educators, and the steady support of parents. We are especially proud of Shivasti Singh, who achieved the highest mark in English in the district, and of our Business Studies results, where Heather led the district. My congratulations to Mrs S. Kunnen and Mr Gobindlall for this outstanding achievement. We also celebrate Mr R.J. Pillay, whose learners attained the best results in the district in Engineering Graphics and Design.

Our educators continue to distinguish themselves beyond the classroom. Miss S. Singh has been elected Chairperson of NAPTOA KZN, and Mrs Z. Hussain has been selected as Internal Moderator for English Home Language Paper 3 at the provincial level. These achievements speak to the depth of expertise and professionalism within our staff.

This year holds special meaning for us as Heather Secondary School celebrates 45 years. It is a moment not only to look back with pride, but to recognise the people — past and present — who have shaped this school into what it is today. Over the course of the year, we look forward to bringing our community together through a range of commemorative events, including a reunion of past educators and learners. As part of this journey, we acknowledge the meaningful partnership we have built with Mr Nithia Naidoo and ProEdX over the past two years. Their involvement has supported key areas of development within the school, and they will continue to play an integral role in the initiatives and activities planned for our 45th anniversary celebrations.

Like any living community, this term has also brought change. We bid farewell to Mr E. Govender and thank him for his contribution, while acknowledging Miss S. Makhan for stepping in where needed. As the YES Programme concluded, we also said goodbye to Miss H. Sadhai, Miss N. Gungapersad, and Mr N. Orrie, and thank them for the role they played during their time with us. At the same time, it is encouraging to see continuity, with Mr R. Govender, Miss S. Makhan, and Mr B. John taking on ongoing roles within the school. What is deeply encouraging is the sense that something is shifting within the school. There is a growing alignment around standards, a stronger culture of accountability, and a shared belief in what we can achieve together.

There have also been moments that remind us of the richness of school life. The visit from East Coast Radio brought great excitement and energy to our learners, while the opportunity for Serante Pillay and Asande Shizalo, together with Mrs N.R. Mtetwa, to represent Heather at the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Budget Address speaks to the broader exposure we want for our learners beyond the classroom.

We have also, sadly, had to come together in grief. We mourn the passing of our Grade 10 learner, Brooklyn Hemmero, and extend our deepest condolences to her family and friends. We also hold Mr Stoffels and Mrs Ramprasad in our thoughts during their time of loss. In these moments, we are reminded that the strength of Heather lies not only in what we achieve, but in how we care for one another.

Our responsibility also extends to ensuring that the conditions for learning are right. In our recent engagement with the MEC for Infrastructure and Development, Mr Martin Meyer, we raised key issues affecting the school, including the burden of utility costs and the future of Heather Hall. These matters remain important, and we will continue to engage constructively in the interest of our learners. I would like to congratulate Ms Faith Nzimande on her election as Chairperson of the School Governing Body, and welcome newly elected members Mrs S. Naidu, Mr L. Govender, and Mr E. Naidoo. We wish Ms Nzimande, the SGB, and the newly elected members every success in the important work ahead, and thank outgoing members for their service.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to our partners and supporters, including Hlanganani Engineers and Back2Pack, whose contributions continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our learners and the work of the school.

As we mark 45 years, we do so with a clear understanding: the strength of Heather has always been its people. If we continue to move forward together — with purpose, with care, and in harmony — there is every reason to believe that our best years still lie ahead.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours by concord and harmony,

Mr S Reddy

Principal
Heather Secondary School



Introducing Ms Faith Nzimande: Leading with Purpose, Unity and Vision



Ms Faith Nzimande

Heather Secondary School is proud to welcome Ms Faith Nzimande as the newly appointed School Governing Body (SGB) Chairperson — a leader grounded in community, driven by purpose, and committed to advancing the school's continued journey towards excellence.

Ms Nzimande's connection to Heather is both meaningful and steadily built over time. Having joined the SGB in 2023, her journey with the school has been one she describes as inspiring and rewarding. During this period, she has actively contributed to the growth and development of the institution, working alongside dedicated educators, parents and staff who share a deep commitment to the success of every learner. For her, Heather is far more than a school — it is a community shaping young leaders, where talent, confidence and character are nurtured with intention.

At the heart of her leadership is a strong personal foundation. Reflecting on her own schooling years, Ms Nzimande recalls the powerful sense of belonging formed through friendships, shared experiences, and the encouragement of teachers — moments that helped shape her confidence, character and values. Today, she brings that same ethos into her role: a passion for community development, a commitment to creating meaningful opportunities for young people, and a belief in teamwork, creativity and problem-solving as essential drivers of progress.

As SGB Chairperson, Ms Nzimande aspires to be a supportive, approachable and collaborative leader — one who listens to the voices of parents, educators and learners alike, and who leads with transparency, respect and a commitment to shared progress.

This leadership philosophy is grounded in a deep appreciation for unity in diversity, captured in a quote that resonates strongly with her outlook:

"In diversity there is beauty and there is strength." — Maya Angelou

It is a sentiment that reflects not only her personal values, but also the spirit of Heather Secondary School — a community bound together by its diversity, and strengthened through mutual respect and shared purpose.

Her priorities for the term ahead are clear and purposeful: to strengthen collaboration and connection between parents, educators and school leadership; to support initiatives that enhance the learning environment and expand opportunities for learners; and to foster a culture of excellence, discipline and respect across the school community.

What excites her most about Heather's future is the strong and growing sense of commitment she sees across all stakeholders. She recognises the momentum the school is building, and the opportunity to deepen its impact by building on its strengths and creating even greater pathways for learner success. This aligns closely with the school's broader vision of being recognised as the hallmark of educational excellence, where every learner is equipped to navigate and shape our dynamic society.

Importantly, her appointment comes at a significant moment in the life of the school, as Heather celebrates its 45th anniversary. This milestone is not only a reflection of the school's rich history, but also a powerful opportunity to reconnect with alumni, honour those who have contributed to its legacy, and strengthen the pathways between past, present and future generations of learners. Ms Nzimande sees alumni as a vital part of the school's ecosystem — offering mentorship, opening doors to opportunity, and reinforcing a sense of pride and belonging that extends well beyond the classroom.

Central to her perspective is the belief that a successful school is built on partnership. Parents, educators, alumni and the broader community each play a vital and interconnected role: parents provide support and encouragement at home; educators guide, challenge and inspire within the classroom; alumni bring lived experience and opportunity; and the community contributes resources and support that strengthen the school. Together, these forces form the foundation of a thriving educational ecosystem.

In reflecting on Heather's enduring motto, "By Concord and Harmony," Ms Nzimande offers a practical and powerful interpretation — one that speaks to working together with mutual respect and understanding, supporting one another, and building a positive environment where every individual can contribute towards a shared goal. In this way, the motto becomes more than words; it becomes a lived expression of the belief that in our diversity lies both our beauty and our strength.

Her message to learners is both simple and profound: believe in your potential, take pride in your education, work hard, stay focused, and support one another — because the effort invested today will shape the future you go on to build.

To the broader Heather community, her call is equally clear: let us continue working together to support our school and our learners. Through active involvement, open communication and a shared commitment to excellence, we can ensure that Heather Secondary School continues not only to grow, but to thrive.

As Heather builds on its proud legacy and looks ahead with ambition, Ms Faith Nzimande's leadership signals a continued commitment to unity, excellence and purposeful collaboration — a reminder that the strength of the school lies, above all, in the collective will of its community.

Excellence on Display: Heather Secondary School Shines at the 2025 Northdale Circuit NSC Excellence Awards

When excellence is recognised, it deserves to be celebrated — and at the 2025 Northdale Circuit NSC Excellence Awards, Heather Secondary School stood proudly among the very best.

Held at Heather Hall, 25 educators were honoured for outstanding academic achievements, collectively receiving 31 awards for subject pass rates above 90% and for producing the highest marks in the circuit. The school was further recognised for its exceptional 97.2% NSC pass rate, reinforcing its position as a leading institution in the Northdale Circuit.

Perfect 100% pass rates were achieved in Business Studies, Consumer Studies, Engineering Graphics & Design, Information Technology, Life Orientation, and Tourism. The school also claimed Highest Mark in Circuit honours in Business Studies, Economics, Engineering Graphics & Design, English Home Language, and isiZulu FAL. These achievements reflect a strong, aligned school community where educators, learners, and parents work together in pursuit of excellence. Heather Secondary School congratulates every award recipient — your dedication defines our culture of excellence.



Beyond the Classroom: A Day in the Wild

Our Grade 12 learners traded classrooms for the wild on an unforgettable excursion to Tala Private Game Reserve — and what a day it was!

From the moment they arrived, the adventure began. A thrilling game drive brought learners face to face with magnificent wildlife, while an exciting nature walk deepened their appreciation for the world beyond textbooks. The highlight for many was an electrifying snake show that had learners equal parts fascinated and wide-eyed with wonder. And to round off the perfect day? A refreshing splash in the swimming pool, pure joy well deserved.

Educators and learners alike soaked up every moment, sharing laughter, creating lasting memories, and recharging their spirits together. It was more than just a day out — it was a reminder that the best learning sometimes happens outside the classroom.

Here's to our incredible Grade 12s — you deserved every moment of it!



AT A GLANCE

Titans Table Tennis Club Inspires Heather Secondary Learners

The Titans Table Tennis Club recently visited Heather Secondary, bringing energy, excitement, and inspiration to our learners. Through engaging demonstrations and practical guidance, the team shared key techniques to help learners develop their skills, confidence, and understanding of the game.

Learners were especially honoured to meet four-time South African men's champion Kurt Lingeveldt and U23 women's champion Karen Pillay. Their passion for the sport and words of encouragement inspired learners to aim higher, remain disciplined, and pursue excellence both on and off the table.

We extend our sincere thanks to the Titans Table Tennis Club for their valuable contribution and for promoting not only a love of sport, but also the values of dedication, discipline, and perseverance within our school community.



Heather Secondary Soccer Team Shows Promise in First Term Friendlies

Heather Secondary's senior soccer team completed five friendly matches as part of their preparation for second-term tournaments. While the U17 side faced two early losses and a draw, the team showed steady improvement. Strong performances followed, with impressive wins in the U19 (5-1) and U15 (3-0) divisions.

Outstanding learners recognised as players of the match included Mduduzi Zuma, Luthando Makhaya, and Anele Sithole. Throughout the matches, the team demonstrated excellent ball control, discipline, and teamwork.

These fixtures have helped build confidence, fitness, and sharp decision-making, as the team continues to develop young talent and strive for success in upcoming competitions.



Grade 12 Learners Experience Shakespeare at Hilton College

Heather Secondary's Grade 12 learners recently enjoyed an enriching educational excursion to Hilton College, where they watched William Shakespeare's Othello come to life on stage. The performance offered learners a deeper understanding of the setwork, bringing characters, themes, and emotions vividly into focus.

The live production made the study of literature more engaging and meaningful, helping learners connect classroom learning with real-world experiences. Beyond academics, the outing also provided a refreshing change of environment and a chance to bond.

Overall, the excursion was a memorable and valuable experience, leaving learners inspired and appreciative of the power of theatre.



AT A GLANCE



East Coast Radio Brings Music and Magic to Heather Secondary

Our school was alive with excitement as East Coast Radio transformed the day into a vibrant celebration of talent and rhythm. From powerful drumming and energetic dance routines to outstanding singing performances and a soul-stirring choir, our learners truly shone on stage.

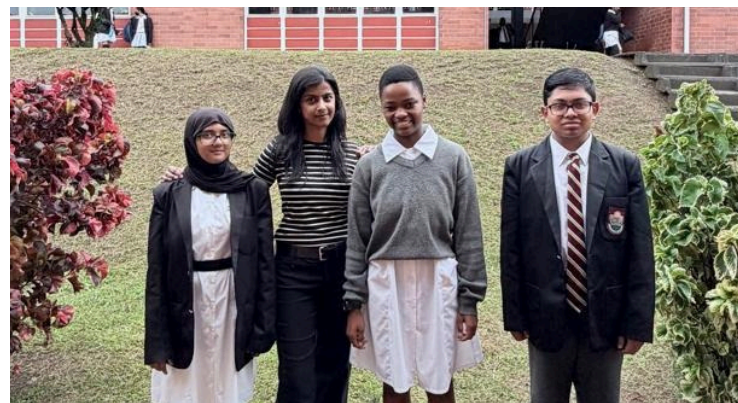
A special thank you to Shaina-Rae and Styles Mbatha for their incredible energy and for creating unforgettable moments that had everyone on their feet.

We are grateful for this fun-filled experience that brought joy, unity, and lasting memories to our school community.

Grade 8 Learners Embrace an Exciting Start at Heather Secondary

The Grade 8 class of 2026 has settled into high school life with enthusiasm and pride. Rishaal Naidoo chose Heather Secondary for its strong academic offerings, including IT, and opportunities such as chess, where he hopes to excel. Although orientation brought some nerves, it quickly turned into excitement as learners explored the school and met their teachers.

Many learners are enjoying new friendships, supportive educators, and excellent facilities. Khadija Yousuf praised the clean environment and impressive grounds, while Asimbonge Mthembu admired the dedication of senior learners. Overall, Grade 8 learners are motivated to achieve success and make the most of every opportunity.



Celebrating Creative Excellence

Heather Secondary School is beaming with pride as two talented learners shone in the 2025 South African Schools Creative Writing Competition, hosted by Beyond the Vale.

Kaitlyn Phillips secured third place in the 13–15 category with her imaginative story “Jungle,” impressing judges with vivid storytelling. In the 16–18 category, Tashmira Sooklal also earned third place for her powerful piece, “Poveglia Mirage.”

Both learners received a published book featuring their work and a R100 DotDot voucher.

Congratulations to these inspiring young writers! Their creativity and dedication continue to uplift our school community, and we eagerly await their next literary achievements.



AT A GLANCE

A Splash of Success at Interschool Gala Day

Heather Secondary School proudly hosted a vibrant Interschool Gala Day, welcoming learners from Kharina Secondary, Raisethorpe Secondary, and M. L. Sultan Secondary. The event was filled with energy as learners competed in a range of swimming events, showcasing all major strokes and exciting relays.

Strong support from peers and educators created an uplifting atmosphere, while many swimmers achieved personal bests. Powered by incredible team spirit and coordination, relay teams rose to the top.

Throughout the day, learners displayed admirable sportsmanship, respect, and determination. With several podium finishes, Heather Secondary School emerged as overall winners — truly a proud moment celebrating talent and school spirit.



From Heather to Cairo

Heather Secondary School proudly congratulates Mrs Niksha Bositsumune-Dhanlall, our Hindi educator, on her selection to represent South Africa at the Africa Regional Hindi Conference in Cairo, Egypt, on 8–9 February 2026.

This prestigious event, hosted by the Embassy of India, brought together leading Hindi scholars and educators. Mrs Dhanlall's invitation highlights her dedication and impact in Hindi education.

At Heather Secondary, over 50 learners study Hindi under her inspiring guidance at both First and Second Additional Language levels.

We celebrate this remarkable achievement and wish Mrs Dhanlall every success as she represents our school and country with pride on the international stage.



Honouring Academic Excellence

Heather Secondary School proudly hosted its 44th Annual Awards Ceremony on 22 January 2026 at Heather Hall, celebrating the achievements of learners from the 2025 academic year. A total of 148 awardees received 175 awards, recognising outstanding dedication and performance.

The celebration marked an outstanding 97.2% NSC pass rate, a testament to the dedication of both learners and educators. The event was honoured by the presence of Guest of Honour Mrs Thobekile Gambu, alongside Circuit Manager Ms T.C. Langa and Mr T.L. Mvubu, the CES uMngeni CMC.

Parents, staff, and learners gathered in a joyful atmosphere, making the evening a truly inspiring celebration of excellence and school pride.



Tribute to Brooklyn Hemmero



Heather Secondary School is deeply saddened by the loss of our beloved Grade 10 learner, Brooklyn Hemmero. Our hearts go out to her family, friends, and everyone who knew and loved her.

We remember Brooklyn for her bright spirit and the joy she brought to our school community. Our thoughts and prayers are with all who are grieving her passing, and we stand together in this difficult time, supporting one another with love and remembrance.

May Brooklyn's memory inspire us to cherish every moment and to support each other with kindness.

Stand Up Against GBV

Everyone deserves to feel safe, respected, and valued. Sometimes situations or behaviours may make you feel uncomfortable, pressured, or unsure; this can happen across all types of relationships and even online. These can include hurtful words, unwanted attention, or being made to feel afraid or controlled.

If something doesn't feel right, trust your instincts and speak to someone you trust, such as a teacher, parent, or school counsellor. You can also contact the GBV Command Centre (0800 428 428) or Childline South Africa (0800 055 555) for confidential support. In emergencies, call 10111.

Let's look out for one another by being respectful, supporting our friends, and speaking up when it matters. Remember, you are not alone — help is always available.

Celebrating 45 years of Heather

Forty-five years ago, Heather Secondary School opened its doors for the first time. Few could have imagined then what it would become — a thriving institution that has shaped the minds, characters, and futures of thousands of young South Africans.

That journey reached a proud new chapter on 16 January 2026, when the school officially launched its 45th anniversary celebrations. Learners, educators, parents, governing body members, and departmental officials gathered together — all 1,177 current learners among them — to mark the occasion with the energy and spirit that has always defined Heather Secondary School.

Four and a half decades is no small feat. Over the years, this school has quietly produced leaders, professionals, artists, athletes, and innovators who carry its values into every corner of society. Behind each of those success stories stands a dedicated teacher, a supportive parent, and a determined learner who refused to settle for less.

This anniversary is as much about people as it is about time. It is a tribute to the educators who showed up every day, the community that stood behind the school through every season, and the alumni whose achievements continue to reflect the institution's enduring legacy.

To mark this milestone in style, Heather Secondary School has unveiled its official 45th anniversary monogram — a symbol that bridges heritage and hope, honouring where the school has come from while pointing boldly toward the future.

And the celebrations are far from over. Events and activities will continue throughout 2026, drawing past and present staff, learners, and community members into a shared moment of reflection and joy.

As Heather Secondary School looks ahead, one thing is clear: the next five years will bring the school to a half-century of excellence. The foundation is strong. The story is not done.

Here's to 45 years — and to everything still to come.



Our 45th Anniversary Logo



A. Shield Shape:

A classic symbol of protection and tradition, representing the safeguarding of values and principles within an educational context.

B. Maroon:

Reflects passionate and victorious strength, combined with resilience, solemnity, and control. It symbolises the tradition and seriousness required in the pursuit of knowledge.

C. White/Silver:

Signifies purity, innocence, beauty, sincerity, and truth. It represents transparency, integrity, and a peaceful, truthful commitment to academic and personal growth.

D. Green:

Traditionally symbolises hope, joy, and loyalty. In the emblem, it emphasises growth (both personal and intellectual), connection with nature, and a commitment to nurturing hope and joy in education.

E. Sunburst:

Indicates enlightenment and the dawning of a new era. It reflects the school's commitment to leveraging the power of learning and education to create a brighter future especially in tough circumstances.

F. Heather Sprigs:

A symbol of resilience and adaptability, the sprigs of the heather shrub (known for thriving despite poor soils) reflect strength, hardiness, and beauty. The sprigs represent hope and growth, rooted in the school's values.

G. Open Book:

Represents the pursuit of knowledge, inquiry, and academic exploration, serving as a cornerstone of learning. It reflects the importance of education as a tool for empowerment.

H. 45 Years:

Commemorates a milestone of sustained excellence, growth, and service since the school's founding. The number signifies the legacy built over four and a half decades of dedication to education, the impact on generations of learners, and a continued commitment to shaping future leaders in a spirit of concord and harmony.

I. Motto: "By Concord and Harmony"

Highlights the importance of unity, inclusivity, and mutual respect within a supportive educational community, working collaboratively toward shared goals.



High Flyers

Heather Secondary School is proud to celebrate a phenomenal 97.2% pass rate for the 2025 academic year — an achievement built on the hard work of learners, the dedication of educators, and the unwavering support of parents and the broader school community.

Special recognition goes to the top 10 learners in each grade, whose commitment, discipline, and resilience set an inspiring example for all.

Beyond the classroom, our alumni are making their mark. Leya Pillay is studying Chemical Engineering at the University of Pretoria, Akinchana-Krsna Das Singh is pursuing Neuroscience at Wits, and Rylan Cole Sheik is pursuing his legal studies at UKZN — each carrying the values of Heather Secondary into the next chapter of their lives.

Their message to current learners? Work hard, stay focused, and never give up — the best is yet to come!

GRADE 8 MERIT AWARDS



1. Kyra T Reddy
2. Isabella Lutchman
3. Kaitlyn L Govender
4. Phiwokule Ndlovu



5. Alison C Naidoo
6. Kairav Singh
7. Mohamed A Ally



8. Tiara Pradgheen
9. Kaitlyn K Phillips
Gabrielle D Sookram

GRADE 9 MERIT AWARDS



1. Ashlen Naidoo
2. Joshua E Brigmohun
3. Rejoice B Binsanga
4. Shania A Naidu



5. Camdon Reddy
6. Shayden Chetty
7. Shreeya Bharosa



8. Emelia Stanley
9. Damian Naidoo
10. Saharsh Maistry

GRADE 10 MERIT AWARDS



1. Fathima Z Mohamed
2. Mohammed I Ansari
3. Gabriella C Paul
4. Nicole N Chagwedera



5. Aditi Bajjnath
6. Saandhiya Kisunlal
7. Nikita E Pillay



8. Abdullah A Nazir
9. Preeti Bisjnath
10. Zahira R Mohamed

GRADE 11 MERIT AWARDS



1. Arlaihah Naidu
2. Deran Mudaly
3. Neepa Sevenundan
4. Hlengiwe Sefefo



5. Cian R Jacobs
6. Simphiwe P Nzama
7. Mohamed A Ally



8. Ashleigh T Corodimus
9. Tarikha Singh
10. Miyanka D Aiyer

GRADE 12 MERIT AWARDS



1. Neevashnie Naicker
2. Reesha Singh
3. Leya Pillay
4. Shumaisa Sookhai



5. Surina Aiyer
6. Rylan Cole Sheik
7. Rahel Yuvaan Roopen



8. Akinchana-Krsna Das Singh
9. Amelia Keyana Pillay
10. Abigail Reddy

Heather Life in Stills



Educate. Empower. Elevate.



From ProEdX — Heather's school improvement partner since 2024

www.proedx.org



AI is here - what do you actually need to know?

Artificial intelligence is not a future technology. It is already inside the tools your child uses to study, the platforms alumni use to build CVs and pitch ideas, and the search engines everyone uses every day. The question is no longer whether to engage with it. The question is how to engage with it well?

Here is what it actually is, how to access it, and what to watch for.

What AI is — without the jargon

At its core, AI tools like ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, and Claude work by predicting what a useful response looks like based on an enormous amount of text they have been trained on. They are pattern-recognition engines — extraordinarily good at producing fluent, structured output. They are not thinking. They are not always right. And they have no way of knowing what they do not know.

That distinction matters. A person who understands it uses AI as a thinking tool. One who does not uses it as an answer machine — and builds nothing in the process.

How to access it

Most tools are free at a basic level and accessible from any smartphone or browser. No downloads are required for most.

ChatGPT: chat.openai.com — free tier available. Most widely used globally.

Google Gemini: gemini.google.com — free, integrates with Google Docs and Gmail. Useful for research and drafting.

Microsoft Copilot: copilot.microsoft.com — free, built into Microsoft Edge and integrated with Office tools. Useful for document and presentation work.

Claude: claude.ai — free tier available. Strong for long-form writing, analysis, and structured thinking.

All of these work best when you give them context — not just "write me an essay" but "I am a Grade 11 learner writing an argumentative essay on water scarcity in South Africa for an English Home Language task. Help me structure my argument and identify my weakest point." **The quality of what you put in determines the quality of what comes out.**

Three legitimate uses — and what to watch for in each

For learners: studying and understanding AI can explain concepts in plain language, generate practice questions, summarise a chapter, or help a learner identify where their understanding breaks down. Used well, it accelerates genuine learning. The warning sign is using it to generate answers to submit — this produces output without understanding, and understanding is what gets tested in an exam room with no internet connection.

For alumni: refining CVs and professional documents AI is genuinely useful here. Paste your CV and ask it to identify weak phrasing, improve clarity, or tailor your summary for a specific role. Ask it to help you write a cover letter and then rewrite it yourself in your own voice. The risk is submitting AI-polished documents that do not sound like you — which becomes obvious the moment you are interviewed.

For innovators: developing a pitch or business idea AI can help structure a pitch, stress-test assumptions, identify gaps in an argument, and suggest what a sceptical investor might ask. It is an excellent sparring partner. The risk is mistaking fluent output for good thinking — AI will produce a confident-sounding business plan whether your idea is strong or not. Use it to challenge your thinking, not validate it.

The one habit that matters most

Treat AI output the way you treat advice from someone who is very well-read but has never actually done the thing you are trying to do. Useful. Worth hearing...But definitely NOT the final word.

Check it. Question it. Rewrite it in your own voice. Use it to go further than you would have gone alone — not to replace the going at all.

The conversation that changes the term -

What parents can do at home that no teacher can do for them.

The Class of 2025 produced 140 A-symbols. Failures dropped from 12.4% to 2.8%. Behind those numbers were learners who arrived at school with clarity about what they were working toward — and why. That **clarity starts at home.**

Ask the Why question Not "what do you want to be?" — that is too far away. Ask: "What do you want to be able to say about this year when it is over?" Help them write the answer down. Put it somewhere visible. Learners who know why they are working perform differently to those who are simply managing the next deadline.

Name the three commitments Discipline over distraction. Resilience over excuses. Purpose over pressure. These are not slogans — they are daily decisions. Your role is to hold them to it, not do it for them.

Make past papers non-negotiable One past paper per subject per week from now until finals. Timed. No phone. Then marked honestly. Matric past papers are available free at education.gov.za. Your child does not need you to mark them. They need you to hold the commitment.

The Heather Alumni Community is
being built — Join Us!



Add Your Chapter.

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/5MtGD8qiX5>