



# THE DRAGON



NEWSLETTER OF ST. GEORGE'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

24 January 2012

Dear Parents/Guardians

Welcome to the 2012 academic year and an especially warm Georgian welcome to our new parents and learners. I hope that the holiday period proved to be restful and rejuvenating. Term 1 will be jam-packed and full, so fasten your seat belts and let's start the year.

As you are aware, I have taken over from Geof Burton and I am now in place as the Deputy Head of the school and also as the Principal of the High School (Grade 7 to 12).

Willie Lategan will be overseeing Academic matters, Caron Olivier is now directing our Ethos, Service and Outreach and Feroza Salie will be assuming responsibility for Learner Development.

Together with Julian Cameron, we represent the High School Management team.

Mr Scharnick has very kindly agreed to continue in his role of Sport Co-Ordinator.

Recently, I shared with staff how deeply humbled I am and that I am filled with gratitude for the opportunity of leading the High School into the future.

I also shared with staff and with our learners that two of the core educational values which I will stress this year are RESPECT and ACCOUNTABILITY.

We have planned a number of Parent Information evenings for this term at which time, I would love to meet you. However, if you need to make an appointment to see me before then, please email me at [michelle@sggs.co.za](mailto:michelle@sggs.co.za) and from the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2012 at [msylvester@sggs.co.za](mailto:msylvester@sggs.co.za).

## NAME CHANGES

You may have noticed that we now refer to ourselves as a High School with 2 phases: a GET Phase and a FET Phase. The GET phase refers to Grade 7 to 9. The FET phase refers to Gr 10 to 12.

We are still the same St George's with a strong commitment to pastoral care and balanced excellence in all aspects which is a hallmark of our school. We now see ourselves as one team across the High School (Grade 7 to 12) as opposed to a separate Middle and Senior School.

#### NEW MEMBERS OF STAFF

It is a pleasure to welcome Ms Alix Staniland (a past pupil) to our Staff as well as Mr Andre van Vuuren who comes to us from Muizenberg High. Ms Staniland will be teaching English and Maths, whilst Mr van Vuuren will be teaching EMS, Business Studies and Mathematical Literacy.

This week, we also welcome Ms Jenna Chipps to our staff. She is a fourth year UNISA educational practical student. She will be with us for Term 1. Ms Chipps will be fully involved in school life and will be teaching LO and English in the Gr 10 to 12 phase (FET) and thereafter History in the Gr 7 to 9 phase (GET). She will be helping out with Softball this term.

#### PUNCTUALITY

Punctuality is not negotiable and is an essential lifeskill for our learners. Learners need to be at school by 7.55 am every morning. Please allow for traffic in planning your time of departure from home. We understand that from time to time some learners will be late. However, this should be the exception and not the norm.

#### STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

Please study this booklet with your child. We need to get the uniform right as at the beginning of this term, I noted that many of our young men had not shaven. Learners will be required to shave at school, if they disregard initial warnings.

Far too many learners were not properly attired. We do need your co-operation and support as parents in this regard.

#### HOMEWORK ROOM

In previous years, we provided a compulsory "Supervised Prep" for our learners who had to wait for lifts after school. This year we have a voluntary HOMEWORK ROOM venue for learners. This will be supervised by a member of staff and will take place in the Business Studies room in Bloemendal. Homework Room will be run from Monday to Thursday from 3pm to 4.15pm.

I request that you encourage your child to make use of this venue.

A reminder also, that learners are required to wait for their lifts on the school property and not on Richmond Road. They will be ushered inside by our Matric leaders if they are seen outside the property. This is a safety precaution.

#### STATIONERY LISTS – GET PHASE

Tutors will hand out the lists today. It appears as if some of our learners did not receive them in 2011. Please accept our apology.

#### LIFT TO MILNERTON

One of our learners in Grade 8 requires a lift home in the afternoons. Please make contact with Mrs Mariola Fouche. Her email address is: [fouche.mariola2@gmail.com](mailto:fouche.mariola2@gmail.com)

#### MATRIC LEADERSHIP

Yesterday, our matrics were inducted as leaders. We have a policy of shared leadership with a portfolio system. This takes place with the help and guidance of Mrs Vanessa October and our staff . Our matrics also act as mentors to our Grade 7s and I must commend them for conducting an excellent orientation afternoon for our new learners.

Congratulations to all our matrics as they take on the role of student leaders in our school. We thank them in advance for the work which they will be doing.

In conclusion, I am looking forward to the year ahead and to our joining together in partnership i.e: staff, parents and learners forging ahead to take this wonderful school to new heights.

I leave you with this thought from Gen Colin Powell:

"If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception, it is a prevailing attitude."

Yours sincerely

Michelle Sylvester  
DEPUTY HEAD

## **ACADEMICS AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

### **Xhosa in the High School**

We would like to refer all parents to our Language Policy document (accessed via the school web page). After many discussions and consideration of all the relevant factors, it was decided to align ourselves with the National Language Policy, which has as first principle the equal status of English, Afrikaans and Xhosa in the Western Cape.

We realize that many other schools may have different approaches, but we believe it is imperative to raise the status of Xhosa at SGGs. At present, because of the historical context, it is not possible to offer Xhosa as a full additional language, on the same level as Afrikaans. We are going to phase in this gradual raise of the status of Xhosa.

From Grade 10 onwards, learners choose to offer Xhosa or Afrikaans as 1<sup>st</sup> Additional Language, and it is possible to do the other language as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Additional Language.

We would like all learners in the GET phase (Grades 7 – 9) to be exposed to some Xhosa, even those who have never done it before. Xhosa is offered on two tiers. Those learners who show some aptitude are given a better chance of possibly choosing Xhosa as 1<sup>st</sup> Additional Language in Grade 10. These classes will be taken by Mr. Archie Nkonzo, the senior Xhosa teacher.

The other learners will be taught some conversational Xhosa, together with some African culture and history in a non-threatening environment, by Ms. Precious Sibanda, who has been the GET Xhosa teacher for the past few years.

We would like this to be treated seriously and in line with our anti-bias policy and policy of inclusivity.

We emphasise that the status of Afrikaans will not be undermined. In fact, we would like to ensure all parents that we are striving to raise our academic standards even more.

Exemptions to doing any additional language may apply and these may be discussed with Mr. Cameron, Mrs. Sylvester, or Mr. Lategan.

WILLIE LATEGAN  
HOD: ACADEMICS AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

## **ETHOS, OUTREACH AND SERVICE**

As a teacher at St George's Grammar School for the last sixteen years, I have always been passionate about the development of students beyond the academic curriculum and so I was delighted to be offered the post of Head of Department for Ethos, Service and Outreach.

Our focus this year is to create opportunities within the school environment for students to develop both spiritually and emotionally. We are amazed with the commitment and contributions that many students made in the areas of service to the community during 2011 and applaud them all for their efforts. I would like to encourage student to participate in as many aspects of community service during 2012, whether it be the Soup Kitchen, the Green Committee, serving at a Georgian functions or any other initiative. Each student will be issued with a service book to record their activities for the year so that we can acknowledge students who have given of their time so generously.

This term started off with a beautiful Eucharist service led by Reverend Mlundi, a parent of our school body. We would like to thank him for conducting the service and for his words of encouragement to the students and staff at the start of term.

Incorporated into the ethos of our school is the Learner Exchange Program. This term we would like to welcome two students from Markham College in Peru. Gonzalo Farfan is being hosted by Deen Adams and his family whilst Ximena Minan is hosted by Gina Angelica and her family. We wish both these students a wonderful South African experience. Deen and Gina will be attending Markham College in Peru during the third term this year.

This term, the number one outreach commitment is to complete the LEADSA Project at St Michael's school in Khayelitsha. We intend to have this project completed by the end of the term and so students may need to avail themselves for some Saturdays during the course of the term.

I look forward to a busy and exciting year ahead and I welcome any suggestions, offers of help or contributions from our Georgian parents. You may contact me via email:

[olivier@sgqs.co.za](mailto:olivier@sgqs.co.za)

Regards

CARON OLIVIER  
HOD: ETHOS, OUTREACH AND SERVICE

## **LEARNER DEVELOPMENT**

I have recently been appointed as the HOD for Learner development in the High School. I have been teaching at SGGS for the past 7 years. I currently teach Life Sciences grade from 10 to 12 and Mathematics in Grade 9. I look forward to working with you and your child as well as an extremely supportive team of educators. My vision is to ensure the emotional, physical and spiritual well-being of your child so that his/her academic results will be enhanced.

### **Parent-Student Handbook**

A parent-student handbook was developed by staff and sent home for perusal by you and your child. We do hope that you will find this document beneficial and useful. Please do sign the attached agreement and return to your child's tutor at your earliest convenience.

### **Communication**

We pride ourselves at SGGS in the fact that we have an efficient, reliable and effective Tutor system.

The Tutors are the teachers to whom your children will go for the first 20 minutes of each morning from 08h00 – 08h20 unless there is an Assembly or Chapel Service during that time. All messages, absentee notes and medical certificates etc must be handed to your child's tutor.

The Tutor Teachers are your first point of call if there is any issue you would like to address. If it is a subject related query, please do contact the subject teacher directly. The preferred means of communication is via email.

One of the primary roles of the Tutor is that of mentoring and pastoral care and we look forward to working with you in making sure that your child is well looked after and happy at SGGS.

FEROZA SALIE  
HOD: LEARNER DEVELOPMENT

## NEWS FROM THE SPORT DESK

Please note that we offer the following sporting codes during the first term.

1. Tennis - boys and girls
2. Swimming - boys and girls
3. Athletics -boys and girls
4. Softball - girls
5. Cricket - boys

We would like to encourage our learners to sign up for at least one code. Learners must ensure that they are properly attired at all practice sessions. (Black shorts and Yellow PE top.)

Please diarise the following dates:

17 February	Inter-house Swimming Gala	10:30
3 March	Inter-house Athletics	9:00-13:00
9 March	Quadrangular Athletics	15:00-17:00

Thanking you

Lester Scharnick  
SPORT CO-ORDINATOR