



St Cyprian's School

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18 January 2010

Head of School Newsletter

Dear St Cyprian's School Community

A belated Happy New Year wish! May it be a good one for us all, and especially for our wonderful school!

Welcome back to school after what was a comparatively short holiday. Although we have returned to school a week earlier than we did last year, it has been a good start with high levels of energy and enthusiasm – and it has been “all systems go” from Day One.

STAFF NEWS

Welcome:

- A special welcome is extended to our new **Head of Preparatory School, Ms Tracy Laubscher**. Tracy has “hit the floor running” and is already so well entrenched that it seems as if she has always been here. Her warmth of personality and capacity to take things in her stride are the personal gifts she brings to the school. We are delighted to have her as a member of our School Executive, and have already felt the benefit of her energy and experience in preparatory school education.
Mr Thys Lourens has moved back into the role of Deputy Principal Preparatory School for the term, to ensure a seamless management transition. Thereafter, he will be redeployed to the High School to teach Afrikaans. Mr Lourens will remain on the School Senior Management Team.
- **Mrs Catherine Radloff** has been employed as the High School Counsellor in place of Ms Norval. Catherine is a qualified Educational Psychologist, and has held the position of Counsellor at a top state school in Pretoria. She is a great asset to our school as a result of her knowledge and experience, and will reinforce the strength of our Learning Support Unit as well. Mrs Radloff will also be teaching Life Orientation.
- Welcome back to **Ms Barbara Houghton** who was away on sick leave towards the end of last year, to **Mrs Valerie Ewan**, who resigned wef the end of last year but has agreed to stay on for the term (until our replacement French teacher can commence service), and to **Mrs Tiffany Billimore** who has returned to us from maternity leave.
- We also welcome our 3 new Gap Students, our 2 new Boarding House Assistants, the 3 student teachers who are working in the Preparatory School this term.

Resignations:

It is always sad to lose outstanding teachers, but they deserve our best wishes as they embark on new phases in their life journeys.

- **Mrs Nell Kruger** (High School Afrikaans) will be leaving us at the end of the term. Mrs Kruger's husband has retired and she has decided that she needs to be free to spend time with him as they enjoy new opportunities. Mr Lourens will take up Mrs Kruger's classes.
- **Ms Karen Blank** (Grade 3 Teacher and Foundation Phase Coordinator) will be leaving us at the end of term as she is relocating to England. We are in the process of seeking a replacement for Ms Blank.

Congratulations:

- **Ms Caryn Abromovitz** (Grade 2 teacher) was married in the holidays, and has returned to school as Mrs Reznik. We wish her and her husband "Mazeltov", and a blessed future together.

PTA NEW PARENTS COCKTAIL PARTY

My thanks go to the PTA for organising this function. It was wonderful to meet and chat to so many of our new parents. As mentioned at the party, we would love as many parents as possible to become involved with the school. We will be sending out a list of areas in which people can offer their services shortly.

SCHOOL NEWS:

1. MATRIC RESULTS!

We are so proud of our 2009 Matric class! Our congratulations go to the girls, their teachers and parents who played a role in ensuring outstanding achievements.

St Cyprian's School had a **100%** Pass Rate for the **12th consecutive year**. However, our distinctive performance this year lies in the detail:

In addition to a 100% pass rate, 98% of our girls achieved **Bachelors Passes** (University Entrance) – a superb achievement! The school's academic performance, rated on the number of Bachelors Passes received plus the number of distinctions obtained by the school, ensured a ranking of **4th in** the top 10 rankings of **"Highest Performing Schools"** in the province. We were publicly honoured for this at the official Announcement of Results Ceremony at Leeuwenhof on the 7th January, as were the other top performing schools in the province. We received a Certificate of Academic Excellence from Mr Donald Gordon, the MEC of Education, and an amount of R10 000 to be spent on learning support material for the school.

The Top 10 Schools were:

1st	Herschel Girls School
2nd	Springfield Girls School
3rd	Westerford School
4th	St Cyprian's Girls School

5 th	Bishops Boys School
6 th	Rustenburg Girls School
7 th	Herzlia School
8 th	Rondebosch Boys' School
9 th	Rhenish Girls School
10 th	Hoer Jongenskloof Paarl

It is interesting to note that 5 of the top 10 schools are girls' monastic schools.

Distinctions Achieved:

142 Subject distinctions were posted from a total of 71 candidates

Top Achievers: Special congratulations need to go to these girls, who set their sights high and worked consistently to achieve their goals. Carey Pike achieved an average in the 90th percentile, and the others were all in the high 80th percentile with only one or two point between them.

No of Distinctions	No of Candidates	Achieved by:
7	3	Carey Pike, Janine Palser, Nicole Uys
6	3	Aurelia Drummer, Sorrel Pitcher, Abi van der Merwe
5	5	Ashley Musgrave, Mariska de Beer, Pasqua Heard, Alexandra Schutte, Cosima Willie

An analysis of our results has highlighted excellent results in the science and mathematical arenas, as well as in the languages and creative arts. Our achievements speak to the holistic nature of excellence across disciplines, a reflection of the academic paradigm adopted by superb teachers – and the motivation of individual students to maximize their opportunities. Together with many other schools in the Western Cape, we are querying the top spectrum of science results. We achieved a number of very high “B’s” which we have sent forward for remarks.

Although we are absolutely delighted with the 2009 results, the point needs to be made that the teaching and learning at SCS is targeted at facilitating academic excellence post matric. Matric is not a full stop in the girls' academic journey, merely a comma as they move on in a world where intellectual curiosity and life-long learning discriminate those that succeed from those that simply exist. Our holistic offer, our ethos and our Round Square association places emphasis on building character, community and competence as well as social conscience and the belief that an individual CAN make a difference. These “softer” aspects are not measured but are just as intrinsic to the St Cyprian’s brand as excellent academics!

2010 – LOOKING FORWARD

Building upon the successes of last year is our aim for this year. Alignment and focus are essential to our organization if we are to continue to move forward strongly. Last year was a huge “change” year and thus a “stretch” year. While this did put a strain on the institution, we have come out of it stronger and better prepared for 2010. We have put in

place a number of operational systems to ensure that the core business of education and the development of our girls is held sacrosanct and at the core of what we do:

1. ALIGNMENT: “REFLECTION, CONSOLIDATION, CELEBRATION”

Building upon the “*e-cubed*” focus of 2009 (energy/efficiency/excellence), our coordinating theme for 2010 is “*r c-squared*”. The goal of **excellence** continues to be the end goal, with our focus this year being on how we get there quickly and efficiently.

REFLECTION - entrenching excellence requires looking backwards and forwards. It requires taking time and opportunity to “sharpen the saw”, so that the way forward becomes more informed and our approach more intentional.

CONSOLIDATION – implies the conscious building upon excellent foundations and the rebuilding of those that may still be slightly shaky.

CELEBRATION - is the reminder to all of us to enjoy what has been achieved, and to use the sense of pride to energise the resources required to keep the momentum going. It refers to a “can do” mind set, and brings a focus to the strength in partnerships – particularly parent partnerships.

2. ACADEMIC FOCUS:

To facilitate the most efficient educational processes, the following changes have been made:

Timetabling:

- **Extending lesson time:** The timetable has been adapted to allow for hour periods, where possible. Having longer periods creates the opportunity for greater academic interface time and contains disruption to the flow of learning.
- **An extended lunch period,** has been built into the timetable once a week, allowing time for club and society meetings, academic clinics, or just space to catch up or connect. It also provides a time for clubs and societies, and minimizes the clash of co-curricular activities.
- **A formalized test period** has been timetabled every Day 10 for Grades 10-12. Although only once a cycle, it ensures predictability, encourages planning and controls test overload.
- **“Back to Basics”** - In the GET phase (Grades 8 -9), electives have been allocated to languages. Base line testing will be done to identify students who need to strengthen their skills in the basic languages and they will be allocated to these lessons. Those girls who are already strong, will be given the opportunity to be introduced to French/German or Xhosa 2nd language in these lessons.

Academic Support

- Our **Learning Support Unit** is now up and running. Our new counselor, who is also an educational psychologist, is a welcome addition to our team of remedial and other specialists. Our systems for keeping tabs on “learners at risk” or with special needs have been put in place, and a whole school approach to managing inclusion has been established.
- **Academic Clinics** in Maths/Science/English/Afrikaans and Xhosa will continue to be offered at the High School However, the way in which they operate will be more intentional, and the timing of them more efficient in terms of making them as accessible as possible to the majority of students.

The purpose of the academic clinics has become better defined:

1. To provide a formal time for “catch up” ie if a student has been absent or away and has missed a key section of the work. Special times will be set aside for exchange girls in Grade 10 who need specific “catch-up”.

2. To address historical gaps and lags and /or reinforce key concepts ie strengthening the foundations for effective future learning. A curriculum will be followed and girls will be able to sign up for those lessons where they have identified a lag.

The aim is to help our girls become proactive/intentional learners, so they can build up a sense of competence and control around their own academic progress ie they become agents of their own learning.

Internal academic clinics have been designed to provide short, sharp interventions that will get girls back on the academic road after they have come across a hurdle. They are not intended to be parallel sessions to what is offered in the classroom.

Please Note:

- Academic Clinics will not provide individual 1:1 tuition, nor is their purpose to be the emergency safety net for students who fail to engage in class. Should a learner require a long term intervention, or somebody “to hold their hand”, this will need to be provided by the parents out of the context of school.
- Teachers employed at St Cyprian’s School may not provide private extra lessons at a fee to the girls they teach. There is a conflict of interests here, it is against the professional Code of Conduct for teachers and it is not in the interests of the learners. Hearing the same thing in the same voice from the same person is unlikely to have maximum impact and simply creates dependence.

3. PASTORAL CARE:

A Tutor System has been introduced to ensure that all girls will be well supported during their time at the school. Tutor groups are small – between 9 and 13 students. Tutor teachers will be responsible for monitoring academic progress and co-curricular involvement, for mentoring and first level counseling. Building house spirit, encouraging a sense of belonging and helping entrench the values and ethos of the school will be primary functions of the tutors.

4. CO-CURRICULAR:

The co-curricular framework supports the co-curricular policy that requires involvement at all levels. Girls in Grades 8-10 are required to involve themselves in 1 sport and 1 cultural activity per term, and girls in Grades 11 and 12 can choose either one or the other. Maximum participation is the goal. The co-curricular offer is wide, providing maximum opportunity for girls to achieve or develop in spheres in addition to or separate to the academic sphere.

2010 promises to be an exciting year! To make it an effective year for every individual, I request parents’ cooperation and support. Please do not allow your daughters to miss school unnecessarily, please do not “help” them by allowing them to stay at home to miss a test they are not prepared for or a deadline they are not ready for. Please do not write them notes excusing them from PE or sports or any other part of the programme they don’t feel like participating in. Please DO ensure they are punctual, properly dressed and prepared for

school. The girls have been told what is required of them, and they know the consequences should they not meet the requirements.

UNIFORMS:

School Bags:

Towards the end of last year, a culture that can best be described as a “bag lady” culture crept into the school. Instead of school bags, girls started carrying their books, files and co-curricular necessities in shopping bags. The girls have been told that this is totally unacceptable. The school satchel or a similar satchel in black or navy is specified in the uniform list, and sports clothes can be carried either in the school sports tog bag.

Summer Uniform:

A reminder that the formal summer uniform is the dress OR the dress and blazer. Jerseys may be worn at school if the weather is cool but may not be worn in the public forum without a blazer.

Socks are white ankle socks folded not rolled, and secret socks are not acceptable.

Sports uniforms are formal as specified in the diary, and track suits are required.

TEXTBOOKS

The new system of ordering and buying textbooks through the 2nd hand shop and Caxtons has worked very well, and my thanks go to all parents who managed the ordering system so well. Like anything new, there were a few people who did not get their orders in on time, but for the most part this was facilitated by Caxtons so students were not disadvantaged.

Changing a system always takes time and effort, but your cooperation made this year reasonably simple. Thank you to all involved. Should you still need help in this regard, please contact Mrs Cherry Muller at mullerc@stcyprians.co.za.

THANK YOU

At the end of last year I received a special gift – a book of special messages from a number of parents. My thanks go to all of you who contributed to this book and to those who organized the printing and binding. It will become a treasure in my box of life memories.

UPCOMING SPORTS EVENTS

**Please use fixtures and times as a guideline only
All fixtures and times are subject to change**

DATE	EVENT	OPPOSITION	VENUE	TIME
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Sports				
	Tennis			
	High			
26 Feb	4 th Team	Herzlia	SCS	15:00
	5 th Team	South Peninsula	South Peninsula	15:00
29 Feb	2 nd Team	Rustenburg	Rustenburg	15:00
	3 rd Team	Jan van Riebeeck	SCS	15:00
2 Feb	4 th Team	Herschel	SCS	15:00
	5 th Team	Zwaanswyk	SCS	15:00
5 Feb	1 st Team	Westerford	SCS	15:00
	2 nd Team	Jan van Riebeeck	SCS	15:00
	3 rd Team	Rustenburg	Rustenburg	15:00
	Indoor Hockey			
	High			
20 Jan	1 st Team	Westerford	Westerford	18:00
	2 nd Team	Westerford	Westerford	18:30
	3 rd Team	Westerford	Westerford	19:00
	4 th Team	Westerford	Westerford	19:30
	5 th Team	Westerford	Westerford	20:00
27 Jan	1 st Team	Stellenberg	Westerford	19:00
	2 nd Team	Stellenberg	Westerford	18:00
	3 rd Team	Stellenberg	Westerford	18:30
	4 th Team	Stellenberg	Westerford	19:30
	5 th Team	Stellenberg	Westerford	20:00
	6 th Team	Stellenberg	Westerford	20:30
	Swimming			
	High			
21 Jan	Senior	League Gala	Wynberg Girls	15:30
28 Jan	Senior	League Gala	Somerset College	15:30
29 Jan	Senior	Inter-House Gala	SCS	8:00 – 11:00
	Athletics			
	Junior			
6 Feb	Gr 4 - 7	Athletics Day	SCS	7:00
	Chess			
	High			
29 Jan	1 st Team	Wynberg Girls	Wynberg Girls	15:00

All other sport fixtures are not yet available.

SCHOOL DIARY

Date	Event	Venue	Time
Mon 18	Grade 12 Leadership Workshop	Room 10	18h00
	“Woods” Classroom Information	Woods	18h00
	Evening	Classrooms	

Tues 19	Grade 12 2010 Information Evening	Hall	17h30
Wed 20	Prep School Parents' Information	Hall/Classrooms	18h30
Thurs 21	Grades 11 and 12 Career Road Show	Voorkamer	07h30 – 09h00
Fri 22	School Council's Strategic Workshop	TBA	Fri and Sat
Mon 25	SAHISA Meeting	Hall	17h30
Tues 26	RS Junior (Nelspruit) Conference Meeting	Room 10	18h30
Thurs 28	"Woods" Family Picnic PTA Meeting	TBC Voorkamer	17h30
Fri 29	Prep School Class Reps' High School Inter-House Swimming Gala	Voorkamer Swimming Pool	07h50 08h00 – 11h00
Feb			
Mon 1	Propcom	Voorkamer	16h30

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"One's philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices we make. In the long run we shape our lives and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And, the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility."

Eleanor Roosevelt

SUE REDELINGHUYS

Head St Cyprian's School