



# STIRLING HIGH SCHOOL

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Dear Parents, Staff and Pupils

The past year has been an exceptional year at Stirling High.

One thing that I have learnt is that success is always dependent on a person or a group of people and this year has been no different.

I would like to start by thanking our pupils for a very successful year. The commitment and effort shown by the majority of pupils has been very pleasing and the level of involvement in all extra mural activities has grown tremendously over the past few years. Well done and keep it up, your ability to stay focussed and remain committed to various exploits is commendable and bodes well for the future.

During the course of the final matric exams, I regularly commented on the exceptional behaviour and excellent manners evident before, during and after their exams. We can be extremely proud of the children who leave in matric – their testimonials also attest to their maturity and readiness to face the world beyond school.

The next group we truly appreciate at Stirling is our amazing parent body. Firstly, thank you for supporting the school financially through your commitment to paying school fees which allows us to develop and make improvements to our school for present and future pupils. We know that in the current economic climate, it takes sacrifices to ensure that school fees are covered, but we promise to continue to limit fee increases as much as possible while continuing to maintain and upgrade facilities. We promise to continue to use the fees effectively where they benefit the majority of your children. Our fees are lower than at least 6 local schools, and in this regard, we appreciate the effective implementation of our finance policies by both our finance staff and finance committee. We can be very proud of the management of funds and how these funds are made available for priority areas, such as maintenance and more recently extensive infrastructural development.

We also appreciate our parents who are prepared to set the example for their children through their continued involvement and willingness to serve on various committees; including the Prayer Committee, the Governing Body, the Fathers' Club, the PTA Committee, The Finance Committee, the Sport Committee, the Interview Committee, the Marketing Committee, the Governance and Policy Committee, the Culture Committee, the Pastoral Committee amongst others. We have committed parents and we appreciate you.

Particular thanks must go to Mr Andrew Wiseman, who always makes himself available for the school and has been extremely valuable in terms of his background in areas of infrastructure development and finance, as well as areas of HR which come in very handy at a school with a large staffing complement.

We would also like to thank the following governors, who will be leaving us at the end of the year after serving the school faithfully for a number of years. Mr Terblanche, Mr Hanafey and Mr Van Zyl-Smit all added great value to the area of governance during their time on the Governing Body.

Mr Ryan Nell is also stepping down as Chairman of the Fathers' Club, a position he has held for a number of years. During his time at the helm, the Fathers' Club has grown and matured and made a huge difference to both schools. We thank him for his commitment and service to both schools.

Next, the engine house of the school, our staff. This is the group of individuals who create the ethos of a school and do the most important job of educating the future of our country. We have a diverse staff, particularly in terms of their ages. Ranging from around 22, and extending through to the very mature in their 60s. This adds a balanced feel to the staffroom, where the perfect mix of youthful passion and experience evolve into the creation of a team of supportive colleagues who share ideas, useful technology and experience.

We are truly blessed to have a staff of the calibre that exists at our school. Whether one looks at our management team, our teaching staff, our administration staff, our maintenance and cleaning staff, our hostel staff or our outside sports coaches, we are privileged to work with such quality individuals.

On that note, we have a number of staff members who will be leaving at the end of the year and we would like to thank them for their time with us and for the impact they have had on staff and pupils while part of our family.

Mr Webster will be leaving Stirling at the end of the year, to take up the position as Principal at St Joseph's Preparatory and College and we recently held a farewell for him, where we thanked him for his 33 years of service to Stirling High. Since becoming Deputy Principal, shortly before I arrived at Stirling, Mr Webster has continued with his mission to grow the Culture Department at Stirling High, particularly the Jazz component of the Culture Department. He has also taught English and History. Other

areas where he has made an impact are in the marketing of the school, both through social media and print media, as well as assisting me with staffing. We wish him well as he begins a new and exciting chapter of his life.

Mrs Knight, who has been an exceptional and very caring English teacher over many years and who has a long history with Stirling High, after also attending Stirling High as a pupil, leaves us at the end of the year as she, too, begins a new chapter of her life in Australia.

Ms Horton, the Head of Music at Stirling High and someone who has been very involved in the development and training of musicians for the Jazz Band will also be moving to a local church in a music position.

Mr Howe, who has been very involved in our sports department, and coached rugby and cricket at a high level will be moving to P.E. at the end of the year and we wish him all the best in his new position.

Mrs De Kock, our CAT teacher, Head of Girls' Hockey, and supporter of everything Stirling, will be leaving us to return to Gauteng, where her support base/family resides and where she will see more of her husband whose work opportunities are becoming more limited in the Eastern Cape. The staffroom will not be the same without her.

Mr Thompson, Ms Harrison and Mr Lottering will be leaving us as they move to New Zealand, get married and start a new job at Kingswood respectively. We wish these young teachers well and thank them for the enthusiasm, commitment and friendships we have enjoyed in the relatively short time they were with us. All three were past pupils of Stirling High.

We also say goodbye to Mr Mathews and Mr Harvey, who have been helping us out beyond their retirement age in part-time positions and we thank them for many years of faithful service to Stirling High. Mr Harvey will never really leave us – he will return next year to assist with a maternity position for a few months and has agreed to continue to teach our golfers how to hit a ball.

We thank all of these teachers for the difference that they made in the lives of our children during their time at Stirling High and we wish them well as they depart.

We are extremely proud of the improvements that have taken place during the past year and the developments and planned developments that are progressing well.

The hostel bathrooms, school bathrooms, staff quarters and tennis shelter were all completely revamped this year and then our three-storey development started in earnest.

We look forward to the completion of the three-storey development early in the second term of next year.

It consists of a state-of-the-art catering kitchen attached to a large function room that should seat in the region of 350 people. It also consists of a state-of-the-art Science lab and 2 Science classrooms. In addition to this, there will be a large research area which doubles as a library, where pupils will have access to the internet in the afternoon. There will also be a staff work room, numerous offices and storage areas and a couple of printing rooms.

At the same time, we are developing a second astro which should be completed by the end of February. This facility will allow all of our teams +/- 20, to practise more regularly and at more convenient times.

We are hoping to start a new project, which is situated between the two astros and the cricket field, before the new astro is completed. The plans were approved at BCM this morning. The project will consist of new changerooms and bathroom areas combined with a secondary tuckshop under a large viewing deck, which will service both astros and the cricket/rugby field. These projects will add huge value to our school on the sporting front.

We have recently appointed Marco Marais to our sports office as Head of Cricket and we are confident that his appointment along with numerous others will raise the level of our coaching in 2025. We are looking forward to an excellent year on the sporting front.

We are pleased with our 2024 cricket results – the Girls' First Cricket team won the Border leg of the CSA T20 Schools' u/19 competition and will play early next year to compete for the position of Warrior Franchise winners. Our Boys' First Cricket Team was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> on the Border, behind Selborne and was also named the top-ranked Co-ed 1<sup>st</sup> team on the Border. Well done to our coaches and cricketers.

On the music and culture front, we have recently employed a highly respected saxophonist, who will ensure that our Jazz Band will not skip a beat next year. At the same time, we congratulate our very own Mr Jacques Du Plessis on his well-deserved appointment to the positions of both Head of Music and Head of Culture. He, along with the music department, have some very exciting news regarding additional genres of music to be offered at the High School in future – watch this space.

In terms of academics, we would like to congratulate and thank all the pupils who have reached their goals or have even surprised themselves with their excellent results. Consistent, hard work definitely pays off.

There have been some great results and special mention must be made of Hunter Versfeld (Grade 11), who will be receiving Honours cum Laude at the start of 2025 for achieving over 90% for both June and November. Sibabalwe Kholisa (Grade 9), Shivam Vassan (Grade 9) and Michael Dowie (Grade 10) also attained a final average above 90%.

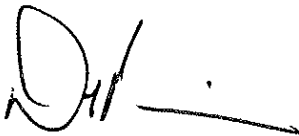
We will be awarding 58 Colours Awards, 37 Honours Awards, 1 Honours cum Laude, 341 Merit Certificates, 87 Academic Badges and 89 Merit Badges in the first week of next year.

We encourage pupils who might have just missed an award to give of their best to achieve the necessary level during the course of 2025. The key to academic success is work ethic. Learners who work consistently, perform well automatically, as they are up to date with all their work, listen in class and ensure that all tests, assignments and projects are done properly. The challenge to all pupils is to TRY to work from day one and to prove that consistent work has a positive impact on their results.

We wish all of our families a blessed Christmas and a New Year full of promise. We are very excited about what 2025 holds and are looking forward to a hugely successful year.

May God bless you all during this Christmas period and may He keep you all safe as you travel or stay in East London during the festive period.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DP', followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Doug Prior