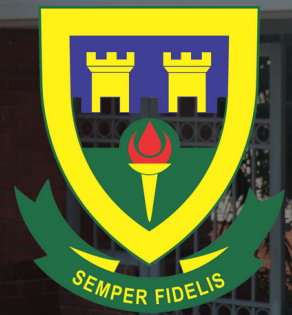


STIRLING HIGH SCHOOL

Newsletter



2025 – Edition 01

DEAR PARENTS, STAFF AND PUPILS

We are well into the First Term and we have enjoyed an excellent start to the year in which we celebrate our 40th year of existence as Stirling High.

We are excited about new opportunities and are already experiencing success and growth in many areas of our school.

As I mentioned at the recent Parent Evenings, we have many reasons to be excited at Stirling High.

- Successful Teaching Staff Appointments
- Academic Achievement of 2024 Grade 12s
- Successful Sport Department Appointment
- Growth and Creation of New Opportunities in Culture and Music
- Successful Marketing/Brand Ambassador Appointment
- Numerous Infrastructural Developments
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Thank you to all parents who attended the Parent Evenings and are already showing their commitment and support to their children and the school.

New staff member appointments

Earlier this year, we welcomed a number of new staff members to Stirling High, many of whom are past pupils and already understand and support the ethos of our school.

We welcomed the following new staff:

Mrs Friend – English, Mrs Sincock – Maths/CAT, Ms Aldag – Music, Mrs Ferreira – Marketing and Mr Marais – Head of Cricket.

We also welcomed our Learnership Staff:

Mr Bentley, Ms Duyvestyn, and Ms Marnitz, are all past pupils of Stirling High who have chosen to become teachers and have proved their commitment to education through commitment and excellence in their studies at school and at University while obtaining their relevant qualifications for teaching.

We said goodbye to Mrs Mathew and Mrs du Preez in January. Mrs Mathew has been an excellent and much-loved Mathematics teacher at Stirling for 23 years and will be joining her husband in her well-deserved retirement. Mrs du Preez, who has been involved in marketing and assisting in the classroom also left us in January to take on new challenges and we wish both of these ladies well and thank them for their contributions to our school.



EDUCATION IS NOT PREPARATION FOR LIFE; EDUCATION IS LIFE ITSELF. – JOHN DEWEY

Academics

We are very proud of the vast majority of our Grade 12 pupils who achieved impressive results in their November exams. We congratulate them, along with Mrs Reed (our Academic Head) and Mrs Lombard (the Grade 12 Grade Head) and all of our teachers who had a role to play in their success.

Our Grade 12s achieved the best overall results for a large High School in the East London area, and were only pipped at the post by two smaller schools (Lilyfontein and Clarendon).

The Matric Class of 2024 achieved:

- A 99.1% pass rate
- An 88% bachelor's pass rate, (a record at Stirling)
- 242 subject distinctions
- 19 A aggregates
- 5 learners with distinctions in every subject they wrote
- 4 learners with 6 subject distinctions and
- 6 learners with 5 subject distinctions
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Our Dux pupil, who also achieved the highest marks in her finals, was Tatum Knox and we congratulate her for achieving an aggregate of over 90% in her final matric examinations.

One of the academic goals for our celebration year will be to achieve a 100% pass at the end of the year. With support from teachers and parents and good work ethic from the matrics, this is an achievable goal.

88% of last year's group have the opportunity to further their studies at a university. We would like to maintain this excellent achievement and try to improve on it. It is important that all of our learners, even the juniors, practise good time management, take their academics seriously and ensure that they are always performing to the best of their abilities.

Our teaching staff are ably led by the Academic Head and Subject Heads, who attend many meetings with the various subject advisors. We are always challenging ourselves to do things differently, make an impact on our learners and assist them in the learning experience.

Correct subject choice is the most critical academic matter in the senior grades because this allows a child to either thrive or panic.

Making a subject change is a very daunting prospect as the outcome is never certain, but it is very clear when it is the correct choice. Children walk taller, own their space and the self-confidence is regained. Should you be concerned about your child, please do not hesitate to contact the subject teacher, grade head or academic head.

The classrooms are very busy at the moment preparing for various assessments and we will be starting the test cycle early in March. Please assist your child with managing his/her academics, to ensure that the first term assessments go well. These marks matter and contribute to the final SBA mark. Please consult the letter that was sent with the test timetable for more information regarding irregularities. Tests should not be missed, as we are not doing any catching up of tests. It compromises the assessment as it has already been made available to the learners.



DUX PUPIL: TATUM KNOX



Sport

On the sporting front, we have enjoyed a very busy start to the year.

The term started off with our First XI cricketers going on tour to play in the Union festival. Our boys played 4 matches and had 2 convincing victories over Nico Malan and Victoria Park. The Stirling Girls' cricket team had an impressive win over Pearson in the CSA T20 competition and unfortunately lost to Kei in the finals, placing our girls in second place in the Eastern Cape.

Our water polo boys and girls have played in several festivals around the country and have had some excellent results, including during this past weekend where they played in the Vides tournament, where they competed against top teams from around the country.

Several of our tennis players represented the Eastern Cape Aloes at IPT and Connor Barnes was selected for the SA u17 tennis team. Our first boys' and girls' tennis team participated in the Merrifield tournament and both teams ended 2nd overall.

We have had two very successful Inter House events where our athletes and swimmers had an opportunity to shine. Stirling had 33 athletes who made it through to the Zonal trials and we appreciate the staff who spend long hours at these events supporting our athletes.

This past weekend, Mrs Jones and Mr Ndakisa arrived at the Jan Smuts "Stadium" before 07.00 and were still supporting athletes until after 19.00. We are fortunate that a number of our staff members show incredible dedication to the children they train.

This coming weekend, we are again looking forward to a competitive weekend of sport. We have a number of cricket teams playing Queens College in Queenstown, we have water polo at Grey in P.E. as well as Crawford's Festival in Johannesburg, and Old Petrian's Festival in Johannesburg, and the Rob Charlton Festival in Grahamstown. Our tennis teams will be in Cradock on a tennis tour.

We also have a Chess competition in Bloemfontein, Girls' cricket playing at Woodridge and Eastern Cape swimming trials taking place in P.E. so transport is at a premium. A number of those pupils left in East London will be assisting with an Eco-club beach clean-up and the Discovery Surfers' Challenge.

We are very excited about our coaching staff for 2025 and encourage all our learners to get involved in the extra mural program offered by Stirling. We are always looking at improving our facilities and we are looking forward to the completion of the second hockey astro turf which should be ready for action by mid- March (the carpet/astro surface was delivered last week). This will allow all of our 20+ hockey teams to practise and play matches on an astro surface and hopefully practise at more reasonable times too.

Culture

The cultural sphere of our school has begun with a very busy start this year and has included a number of exciting developments and additions to the programme. Stirling has become synonymous with a high level of culture and our aim for this year is to build on this by adding to what the school already offers. We would like to increase participation in cultural activities and create an environment that allows all students to achieve at the highest levels.

Rehearsals for the first of our drama productions are in full swing and we are looking forward to another excellent performance by our dramatists, who are under the direction of our drama teacher, who also directed our highly acclaimed production of *Hairspray* in 2024. The title of this year's production is "**Checking In**" by Tracy Wells. It is a comedy that follows the stories of a number of guests as they check into the Regency Hotel Arms. The production will run on both the 14th and 15th of March. Tickets will be sold from our school office.

Later in the year the drama and music department also plan to stage a production in the Guild Theatre celebrating the legacy of high-quality musicals that Stirling has produced in the past. This will include past performers and musicians from Stirling and will form part of our 40 year celebrations. As always, our drama students will be participating in the ELFEST later in the year and working towards the senior and junior one act plays and we look forward to another year of excellence on the stage.

The music department has seen many new developments in a very short space of time. Our music subject numbers have increased this year and we currently have over 135 students taking music as a subject from grade 8-12.

We've welcomed our specialist woodwind teacher, Ms Lauren Aldag who is currently doing a master's degree in saxophone performance and we are certain that our woodwind students are going to gain immense knowledge from her expertise.

We are very fortunate to have a drum and percussion expert and we're extremely excited to have included percussion as a fully-fledged branch of our music department. We have already doubled the number of students learning the drum kit and these students will feed into our drum line ensemble which is now compulsory for all percussion learners.

Along with this we have introduced Marimba bands, which, while open to all students is focused on providing a space for students who are not taking music as a subject by including them in a part of the music programme. The response we have received from our students has been overwhelming with more than 200 students signing up to be a part of one of the many bands that Mr Pitsiladis will be training. This week we're looking forward to welcoming our part-time violin teacher, Ms Caitlin Schulze, who will be working with our group of very keen violinists.

Stirling has been a leader in the area of jazz bands and we're very proud of the level that our jazz band has attained. Maintaining and raising this level is of utmost important to us and under the direction of Mr Kyle du Preez (a highly talented and sought-after jazz musician himself) we are confident this will be achieved. Mr du Preez has been invited to the KwaZulu-Natal Jazz Festival as a featured artist. This will take place in March and our Big Band has been included in the programme as one of the featured jazz bands. This is a fantastic opportunity for our jazz musicians.

The music department is extremely excited to announce that in addition to our jazz bands we have decided to begin a wind band ensemble which will not only complement our jazz bands, but will provide our students with a well-rounded ensemble education with a particular focus on including all types of instrumentation and exposing the students to other styles of music in an ensemble setting.

Our Chamber Choir and Concert Choir have already started well, with plans for the annual vocal celebration and participation in the national ATKV choir competitions.



Our chess teams are currently working towards the first of many interprovincial tournaments and they will be traveling to Bloemfontein to take part in the Grey College Chess Tournament.

We're once again looking forward to one of the annual productions from our Ubuntu society which will take place in the Guild Theatre early in the second term. This event is highly anticipated amongst learners from Stirling and other schools alike.

Brand Ambassador - Marketing at Stirling

We are excited about our recent appointment of Mrs Candi Ferreira, as our Brand Ambassador and Marketing Expert. Mrs Ferreira, who joined us this term, has a wealth of experience in this area and we have already had a taste of the impact she has made in the area of our social media.

Mrs Ferreira is also looking into creating a Web Page for the school that is modern and updated. We have already received many positive comments about her work and we look forward to expanding and professionalising our social media posts and Web Page content in the near future.



**STIRLING HIGH SCHOOL -
WHERE HAPPINESS &
EXCELLENCE MEET.**

We look forward to the completion of the building process on the three-storey development which should be complete and ready for furnishings by mid-year. During this final phase, we hope to have commenced with the next development which has recently been given the green light by BCM, namely the sports pavilion between the astros and the main field that will incorporate an inside and outside viewing area (for spectators), changing rooms and bathroom facilities, storage and a small tuck shop serving area. We have much to be excited about. This project is expected to be completed in approximately 8 months. (Possibly before we return for the start of 2026).

We are planning a number of special events during the course of 2025 to celebrate 40 years of Stirling High and we encourage all parents to join us and support us in these celebrations.

Best wishes for a successful and rewarding year ahead.

Kind Regards

Doug Prior