



## **Leadership**

People are social beings. Throughout all walks of life, people interact in groups. Groups form when there is a common goal. Although each group member has a role to play, there is usually a single individual (or a small group of individuals) who takes greater responsibility for getting things done. Without leadership, most tasks will take longer to accomplish, as people possess different personalities and abilities and do not always agree on the manner in which a task is carried out. It is easier when one person (or a small group) makes the final decision to reach the required outcome.

Throughout man's existence, leaders have emerged and these leaders have become role models for society. Some leaders lack moral integrity and favour those who support them. They alienate the opposition and those with a different agenda. Religion, race, gender, social status and age can play a role when a leader is chosen within a society, team or group. Opinions of the best leaders throughout history will differ, according to each person's outlook on life.

At Southdowns College, we follow a democratic procedure when voting for leaders. Grade 11 learners may stand for election. Individual applications, with a recent photo, are displayed to canvass for votes. Senior learners and teachers are given the opportunity to cast a ballot vote. Thereafter, a short list is compiled and five boys and girls are subjected to a panel interview to select the head prefects. I believe it is important for leaders to be selected by the group that they serve. Within the Student Executive Council, each chosen leader has an individual leadership role which includes: head of house, outreach, academics, sport, culture, marketing, mentorship and head leadership. Personalities are considered when selecting who fits which position, as certain tasks require different skills. Being "people orientated" or "task orientated" is important to consider when working in a group. Introversion and extroversion are also important personality traits when pairing a leader with a portfolio. This is evident when choosing someone to lead the school spirit at a sport event to someone who needs to encourage an academic interest. When deciding on who is given a certain role, consideration must also be given to who can initiate and drive action, perform a specialised task, accept responsibility, keep the channel of communication open and ultimately make a final decision.

I believe that a leader needs to be a role model. I prefer the concept: "Do as I do – not, do what I say!" There are times when the situation requires a "task orientated approach" rather than an "interactive orientated leadership role" in order to get something done. A firm decision needs to be taken if a group is indecisive and unfortunately, this might not always please everyone.

Leaders and followers ultimately need to work together to reach a harmonious outcome. At school level, if the head prefects set a good example, initiate new ideas that form traditions and uphold the ethos of the College, then the name of the College and all those associated with it, will stand in high esteem of the community.

**Written by Bradley Jackson, head boy of Southdowns College High School**