



22 January 2018

Dear Parents

We would like to welcome you, if you are a new parent, to Southdowns College and to our returning families', welcome back.

### ***Class of 2017 Matric results***

Our students are at the heart of our school and we kicked off the year by celebrating with the Class of 2017 as they welcomed in the New Year with outstanding matric results.

A short synopsis of the results is as follows: 100% pass rate, 94% of our students attained a Bachelors Pass (university entrance) and an average of 1.6 distinctions per pupil. The following number of distinctions were achieved:

8: Isabel Klennert

7: Savannah Prinsloo; Ryan Ketcha; Muhammad Dinath

6: Riya Kantilal; Natasha de Ravel

5: Robin Geysler; Bradley Jackson

4: Jordan Thomson

We are overjoyed by the 2017 IEB results and very proud of our students. However, we intend to improve on these results at the end of 2018.

### ***New parents, new staff and staff changes***

Last Wednesday, we began the term with the new parents evening, an opportunity for all of the new families to meet the staff and receive the essential information needed to navigate their way through the busy life of the school.

We welcomed the following new staff: Ms Ladine Joubert (Visual Art); Ms Kristi Uys (Mathematics); Ms Michelle Wehmeyer (Physical Science); Mrs Erika Bantjes (Afrikaans); Ms Elsa Cassell (English); Mr Kendrick Walsh (English); Mr PW Niemann (Mathematics); Mr Gregory Samuels (Physical Science); Mr John-Charles Stay (Life Orientation); Ms Tammy Pietersen (Life Orientation); Ms Jane Bredenkamp (Laboratory Technician in the place of Mrs Caroline Shiell who is moving into the classroom); Mrs Sonto Mokoena (isiZulu); Ms Kerri-Ann Michael (Marketing for all three phases of the school). Each of them bring invaluable skills and passion to the



school and we look forward to their contribution to teaching and extra-mural programmes.

The new staff complement is a healthy mix of experienced teachers and those who have recently joined the teaching profession. The process of recruiting teachers has been rigorous and in many of the subjects, a lesson was taught in front of a panel before the candidate was selected. The Physical Science department will be mentored by Mr John McBride, a highly respected IEB teacher and past examiner, who joined Southdowns in 2017. He will be on site through the months ahead to deliver workshops, classes, and moderate the tests and exams.

Also announced this past week, was the appointment of Mrs Lynette Klopper as a Deputy Head. She will be leading the academic department in her new role. The school management team is comprised of myself, Mr Kgomotso Motlegeloa as Senior Deputy and Mrs Klopper as the executive heads, as well as the following staff members who head up each the portfolio mentioned in brackets below:

Mr Sheldon Rocha Leal (Creative Arts), Mr Ofentse Moeng (Sport), Mrs Debbie Prinsloo (Grade tutors and discipline system) and Ms Carla van der Walt (Leadership and Service).

The Grade Tutors for 2018 are as follows:

- 8: Mr Wicus Jordaan and Mrs Nadia Venter
- 9: Mrs Leanie Pretorius and Mr Barry Schutte
- 10: Dr Madrey Bekker and Ms Adri Odendal
- 11: Mrs Kayley Thompson and Mrs Estean Stirrat
- 12: Mrs Emma Strydom and Mrs Amelia Steyn.

### ***Updates for 2018***

The Grade 12s started the year with an empowerment day designed to motivate, bring together and focus on combined issues that influence the year ahead while encouraging collaboration with their peers.

We do hope you have saved all the documentation sent out in the report envelopes last year pertaining to the cultural and sporting programme for the term and important dates for the year. These documents have been placed on the D6 and the High School APP for ease of reference.



*Enlightened Minds*

We have had to do a fair amount of cajoling in order to have text books returned from last year. Our policy is that if a textbook is not returned at the end of the year then it needs to be replaced before any textbooks are issued in the following year.

There has been substantial progress with regards to the building programme during the holidays. The clubhouse has been properly tiled; the hockey AstroTurf is almost complete, with the players' dugout and the water canon needing to be erected. We will notify you when it will be ready for training. Please note that it will be a high volume usage area and that casual training will not be permitted on the surface.

The new administration block and classrooms will be occupied this coming Wednesday. The building is looking fantastic and we are looking forward to moving in. The next phase will be to convert of the current administration block and related classrooms into the boys boarding facility. This will start in approximately two weeks' time. The building site control point/office will be based in the current boarding parking lot. When the building project starts, please follow the relevant signage to alternative parking and dropping off sites.

The filling of the sinkhole is due to begin once all relevant preparations have been made. A meeting will be held on Wednesday evening (24<sup>th</sup>) 6-7pm, as per notice sent out, where the ADvTECH appointed engineer will address interested parents on the process and the way forward.

With regard to interhouse events, we are actively working on raising the profile of house activities. Mrs Leanie Pretorius will be in charge of this process. The boarding house has been granted the status of being a competitive house and will compete as "Zeus" house. They will have their work cut out for them but in the long run it will be healthy for their relationship building and for the competition. In order for the swimming and athletics staff to be able to select the best participants for the upcoming galas' and athletics meetings, the interhouse gala and athletics will take place at the beginning of the term.

Last year the high school enjoyed a sponsorship from Jaguar–Landrover Midrand. At the end of the year it was confirmed that due to budget constraints they were unable to commit themselves for another year. The sponsorship covered the cost of the first team kit for netball, hockey and rugby. If there is a company, parent owned, that would like to be involved in such a sponsorship for this season, please let us know.

You will see on the year planner that we have arranged to host an information evening for each grade. Our intention is to focus on the needs of that particular year, so each evening will have a different focus and flavour. Please attend these evenings if you are able to. We will be starting all of our evenings at 18:30pm throughout the year in order to avoid confusion. We will have coffee and tea available at the start of each meeting.



*Enlightened Minds*

With a busy year ahead for us all, I hope that the parent and student experience at Southdowns College is in line with our commitment to provide a holistic educational experience that is top class. If you are not happy with any aspect of our delivery, please contact us to discuss the matter.

Kind Regards

Mark Smith

High School Principal