



Information for International Exchange Students visiting Girls' College - 2015



Introduction

We are delighted to introduce St Stithians College – a community of five schools, situated on a large estate in Sandton, north of Johannesburg, South Africa.



The mission of St Stithians is to endeavour to provide an effective school, based on international standards, relevant to the entire community of Southern Africa. St Stithians strives to develop global players with South African roots. The statement of strategic intent of the College sums up the vision – “St Stithians, a South African school, making a world of difference.”

St Stithians is a school in a multi-cultural society which is undergoing exciting transformations – social, political and economic. We believe it is vital to offer diverse educational opportunities for young people within the local and international communities.

History

St Stithians College is a Methodist Church school and it owes its existence to the dream and foresight of three men - Gilbert Tucker, William Mountstephens and Albert Collins. They felt the need for a Methodist school in the Johannesburg area and thus founded a trust out of the unassigned residue of their estates. The Trust was founded in 1941 and named after Collins's birthplace, Stithian, a small Cornish village. Although a piece of land was purchased in 1943 during the Second World War, nothing further was achieved until 1951 when the decision was taken to build.

Since its doors opened in 1953 St Stithians has gained a formidable reputation academically, culturally and through an excellent sporting record. Today the Boys' College and Prep number over 1100 boys, ranging from Grade 0 to 12.

In 1991 Saints celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Trust. During that year the idea of a school for girls was explored and in January 1995 the St Stithians Girls' College (then known as The Collegiate) opened its doors with four classes. By the beginning of 1996, with the near completion of the building of the school, it grew dramatically and since 1997, the Girls' College offers all classes from Grade 0 to Grade 12.



Campus

The extensive 105 hectare (216 acre) estate has retained a country atmosphere, in the middle of bustling Sandton, the emerging financial centre of Southern Africa. Nestled in the valley are the schools, sports facilities and staff housing – the atmosphere is village-like.



St Stithians has created a multi-faceted educational environment. Each of the school units has a clear role in the “whole” yet retains its individuality. Each school has its own head and is autonomous in aspects of ethos.

Summary St Stithians College

School	Grade or Year level	Enrolment 2012	Head
Junior Prep Boys and Girls	0 to 2	484	Mrs M Dace
Boys' Prep	3 to 7	414	Mr A Stewart
Girls' Prep	3 to 7	379	Mrs C Gilardi
Boys' College	8 to 12	758	Mr D Knowles
Girls' College	8 to 12	526	Mrs I Acquisto

The schools represent one institution, St Stithians College, with, Dr Tim Nuttall as Rector. The schools share a common Council and a centralised administration.



For the purpose of the Exchange Programme we focus on the two senior schools which function as a co-ordinate model school.

Characteristic features of the Boys' and Girls' Colleges:

Holistic education

St Stithians prides itself on its academic excellence as well as its sporting prowess and fine cultural record.

Synergistic model

The Boys' and Girls' Colleges are autonomous, monastic institutions yet there is the capacity to introduce, where and when it is deemed to be educationally advantageous, selected co-educational experiences. The mixed casts of the major drama productions, Round Square activities, Spring Festival and the Rugby and Hockey Festivals are working examples.

Christian base

St Stithians is a Methodist Church School with a strong spiritual base. There is a beautiful, centrally located school chapel which is regularly used by all the schools. There are three chaplains based in the school. At Grade 8 and 9 levels religious education is combined with community service. During class time girls visit children's homes, old age homes and schools, and are actively engaged with people in need.



Academic focus

The academic programme as a whole is based in the English medium. It strives to offer a balance of Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Accounting, Mathematics, Languages, Drama, Music, Art and Technology. The school emphasises the development of higher order, creative and critical thinking skills.

St Stithians College students write the IEB (Independent Examinations Board) matriculation examinations at the end of their Grade 12 year. The IEB is internationally recognised.



Extra-curricular programme

In order to promote a holistic educational experience there is a wide variety of sporting and cultural activities offered. These also provide young people with the opportunity to explore and develop leadership skills.

Owing to the wonderful climate and facilities available, outdoor sporting activities are an integral part of the school day. All students are encouraged to participate in summer and winter sports, be it at a competitive or social level. Cultural activities are varied and run throughout the year. Highlights are the drama productions and orchestral and choir performances for Founders' Day. The annual Saints Arts Festival was launched in 2001. During this festival the entire school is able to experience a variety of dramatic, musical and dance sessions at school.



Pastoral care

The well-being of students is a priority and structures are in place to provide support for the individuals yet allow opportunity for growth. There are full-time counsellors in the schools. Students report regularly to a staff member who is their designated tutor. There are also directors who assume responsibility for larger groups of students and staff members. The house system is part of each school.

Leadership

Student leaders are democratically elected in each school. In the Girls' College there is a head girl and a deputy head girl. Every matric (Grade 12) pupil serves on a committee of her choice. The elected committee chairpersons form the School Leadership Council.

Each girl in every grade chooses to serve on one of the above committees and is led by the chair of the committee making up the Vertical Leadership Committee.

There is also an SRC. This body is chaired by the deputy head girl and has elected representatives from each grade level. There are school houses each with elected house captains who run the activities.

GIRLS' COLLEGE

The following information provides details on the structures in the Girls' College for potential exchange students and their families.

The Boys' College runs a parallel, separate exchange programme – the most significant difference being that the Boys' College has two boarding houses and an exchange student may be a boarder. Inquiries about exchanges with St Stithians Boys' College should be directed to the Boys' College.

Head of Girls' College

Mrs Ivanka Acquisto was appointed Head of the Girls' College in 2001. She had served as a deputy head at St Stithians Girls' College prior to this promotion. The core values of St Stithians Girls' College, seeded by Founder Head, Mrs Anne van Zyl, are, therefore, nurtured as Mrs Acquisto and her staff are strong supporters of equal opportunities and preparing young women as leaders for the workplace of the twenty first century.



Academic programme

The curriculum focus is to develop young individuals and provide them with the skills necessary to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Teamwork, communication, time management, analysis, synthesis, data manipulation and use of information and technology are part of the programme.

Girls write a minimum of seven subjects in the matriculation examination (the national school-leaving examination written at the end of Grade 12).

Subject choices: for matriculation

English First Language – compulsory

Afrikaans – at first or second language level or isiZulu or Sesotho – compulsory additional languages

Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy – compulsory

Life Orientation – compulsory

Accounting

Physical Science - option

Life Science (Biology) – option

Information Technology or Computer Application Technology – option

Computer Studies – option

Dramatic Art – option

French – option

Geography –option

History – option

Music - option by special arrangement. There may be an extra fee charged.

Visual Art

A typical subject package would include:

English

Afrikaans as their compulsory second language

Physical Science or Life Science (Biology)

Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy

Life Orientation

Minimum of two options

A seventh and maybe even an eighth subject may be chosen after consultation between student, parents and staff.

Additional Mathematics, French and Drama are popular seventh subjects.

The School Week

- ◆ School day starts at 07h30 with a staff briefing followed by a short registration with the tutor teacher, three days per week.
- ◆ Chapel is held twice a week
- ◆ Daily timetable includes 6 or 7 lessons per day and school academic time ends at 14h30 or 15h00.
- ◆ Breaks:
There are two breaks – the girls can buy nutritious snacks at the tuck shop which opens specifically during breaks.
Most bring their own food from home.
- ◆ Dedicated meetings can also take place in this time. Typically a girl, in a week, will have one session with her tutor teacher, a house meeting, attend a pupil assembly (all pupils meet for a session run by school student leaders). This is a favourite time for many.

Extra-curricular activities start once the official academic time is over. Girls, who are not involved, may go home after the last lesson.

The Resource Centre, with a teacher present, is open until 17h30 daily.

Most sporting activities end at 17h30 and pupils are collected by parents, from the car park.

Sports' programme

St Stithians has a very comprehensive sports programme throughout the year. Coaching is provided for different levels of participation. Competition takes place both at inter-house and inter-schools level. St Stithians has several provincial representatives and some national representatives.





Activity	Term	Time of year
Athletics	Term 3	September – October
Aquatics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swimming Diving Waterpolo 	Term 1 & 3	January to March & Mid-October to December
Cross Country	Term 2	May to July
Tennis	Term 1 & 3	January to March September to December
Rowing	Term 1 & 3	January to March September to December
Squash	Term 1 & 3	
Hockey	Term 2	May to July
Netball	Term 2	May to July
Soccer	Term 2 & 3	May to September

Cultural Activities

Cultural activities are varied and include music, orchestra and choirs (girls only and / or mixed), public speaking and debating, dramatic productions and art club. Many of these activities take place in the evening and involve inter-house and school competitions, the climax being the Inter-House Arts Festival. Girls script a performance to include art, drama, music, dance and singing and which involves every house member.

Parents provide support through provision of transport to and from the activities.

Community Service

The girls are encouraged to participate in some voluntary service



during their time at St Stithians. Grade 8 pupils work towards the Saints Award, an important component of which is forty hours of service in the wider community. Outings are arranged to the Albert Street School, Children's Outreach or the SPCA, for groups of volunteers. Parental assistance with transport is vital.

Service is compulsory for Grade 8 and Grade 9 girls as part of the Religious Education programme.

Houses

St Stithians Girls' College has four houses: Cambourne, Kenwyn, Stratton, Trewen (the names of Cornish villages). Each house has about one hundred and twenty five student members and staff members. The Head of House and Deputy are elected by members of the house. The many varied inter-house activities are co-ordinated by the student leaders. The regular house meetings and the activities promote strong vertical links across the grade levels – girls from different grades work together for a common cause.



Pastoral Care

Girls in any particular grade are also members of a house. There are approximately twenty-five to thirty girls in each house at each grade level. Each house is divided into tutor groups of approximately eleven to fifteen girls. These tutor groups are constructed vertically (i.e. Grade 12 through to Grade 8) to facilitate student support, leadership and mentorship. The tutor's role is essentially a supportive one. During regular meeting time the tutor and student develop working relationships and the tutor, who often does not teach the student any academic subject, becomes a mentor.

Directors

All tutor groups in a grade are co-ordinated by the Pastoral & Seriti Director responsible for that grade.

Student Centre

The School Student Centre, headed by Ms Marisa di Terlizzi and her team of counsellors, provides support for the school body. They are also responsible for the Careers Guidance and Academic Support. An exciting part of the Student Centre activities is peer counselling by a group of senior girls who have volunteered as Peer Counsellors. They are trained by the Life Line organisation.

Each student involved in the International Exchange Programme has access to support personnel through the Student Centre.

Challenge & Adventure

St Stithians College believes that experiential learning is invaluable. Adventure-based Experiential Learning is promoted through the annual camps arranged for each grade.

The Saints Trek, introduced in 1999, has become an annual event on the programme. The Saints Trek was “designed” to challenge the young participants through the key principles of the Round Square organisation.

Key Principles

- International understanding
- Democratic principles
- Environmental awareness
- Adventure
- Service
- Leadership

The Trek participants come from St Stithians Boys’ and Girls’ Colleges, other South African schools and there are places for international participants.

The Trek typically has two phases: –

- **Community Service:**
The first week is based in a remote rural area in the Magoebaskloof. The Trek participants live in the community at Stanford Lake College a member Round Square school. From this base they move out to work on projects identified by the community, such as helping at the local school, playing sport with primary school children, helping at a crèche by providing learning activities, assisting at a clinic and getting involved in maintenance projects at schools and churches.
- **Enviro-Adventure:**
The second phase involves backpacking through the captivating Magoebaskloof where the scenery and light changes are dramatic. The area is situated in the pine forests.
- **Democracy:**
As far as possible the young people make their own choices about managing the camp. Leaders emerge as they are tested in conditions out of their normal comfort zones.



INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

International understanding is promoted through the Saints Trek and the International Exchange Programme.

A viable option is to come for the Saints Trek and stay for about a month's exchange experience.

The International Exchange Programme is aimed at the Grade 10 year (15 to 16 years old). St Stithians Girls' College has developed an exchange programme which is largely reciprocal. Between sixteen and twenty students participate annually, depending on suitability of applicants and places available.

Considerations for visiting exchange students:

COST

What will it cost to send my daughter to St Stithians Girls' College for an international exchange?

The exchange programme is a non-profit venture. St Stithians does not charge fees as students *continue to pay fees at their "home school"*.

The Exchange Student's parents cover the following expenses:

- Parents are responsible for the *return airfare, visas and airport taxes*.
- Parents provide **ZAR 5500.00 (approximately five hundred US dollars)** as a *refundable deposit*. This is to cover incidental medical costs, school excursions, music lessons and other items not covered by academic fees.
- Please see the attached FOREX form to be completed.
- Parents must arrange **medical insurance** cover for the duration of the exchange.
- Parents must arrange **travel insurance** to cover the exchange period and time in transit.
- Parents must provide **pocket money** for the exchange period.

ACCOMMODATION

- St Stithians' families host all visiting students. St Stithians Girls' College does not have a boarding facility. Visiting students live with the host family and are cared for by the family.
- The host covers their board and lodging costs.
- In the event of an expensive outing or trip, for example, a visit to an exclusive game reserve, the host may ask for a financial contribution. This will be discussed beforehand. You are at liberty to communicate if you feel this is not in order. The exchange co-ordinator will make an alternative arrangement for the time in question.

MEDICAL CARE

- *Facilities:*
Sandton Medi-Clinic, a private, comprehensive, modern hospital is adjacent to the school property. There are several other private clinics in the Sandton area. The doctors and technology available are of an



international standard. Medical care is expensive and the medical insurance is essential.

- *Vaccinations:*
No vaccinations are required to enter South Africa. Such regulations may change and information should be checked closer to the time of the exchange.
- *Malaria: Johannesburg is in a malaria free area.*
Students do not need to take prophylactics unless they enter a malaria area. They should only take prophylactics under medical supervision as many have side effects.
Effective insect repellents are available and should be used to prevent insect bites. (Tabard and Peaceful Sleep are common brands which are effective and are available in pharmacies and supermarkets).
- *Drinking water & fresh food:*
Unless signs indicate otherwise, you can drink the water and eat all fresh produce in South Africa. It is advisable to take the usual precautions with regard to washing fruit and vegetables if they are consumed raw.

CLIMATE

Johannesburg is located 28°S and at an altitude of 1600 metres, on the interior plateau of Southern Africa.

The winters (May to September) have typically crisp, sunny days with an average maximum temperature of 16-22°C. The early mornings and evenings can be cold. Frost is common and the wind chill factor can be significant. Summer months (November to March) are hot with midday temperatures of over 26°C being typical. Temperatures of over 30°C can occur. The days are generally sunny but afternoon thunderstorms are common.

Effective sunscreen should be used throughout the year.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- 1 **How much pocket money will my daughter need?**
You set the boundaries. It is a good idea to establish communication with the host parent and discuss the boundaries. You can set the limits according to your family budget.
To give you an idea of costs, in 2014 a movie ticket costs R65.00, a Big Mac Burger about R35.00, a cup of coffee in a café between R15.00 - R20.00 and a Coke R9.00.
The student should purchase toiletries.
Exchange rate varies.
- 2 **How should the student bring pocket money and the deposit?**
 - A bank draft can be used but it entails deposits and it is time-consuming to get the refund in currency other than Rand.
 - Bank cards of major banks can be used. Please check that the bank has facilities in South Africa.
 - An electronic transfer works the best. Please see the bank details attached.



3 How is the host selected?

- The host family will probably have a daughter involved in the exchange programme.
- If the timing of a reciprocal exchange overlaps your daughter will probably NOT stay with her exchange partner. As we cannot use public transport to get to and from school, parents provide all the lifts. It is not realistic to expect this if their own child is away and there are no siblings at St Stithians. The exchange partner's family will entertain your daughter.
- The host will be selected with every care taken to match the visitor with a compatible family with regard home values and interests.

4 Can we contact the host before the exchange?

- As soon as the exchange is confirmed through the co-ordinators, the visitor and host are encouraged to make direct contact through email and telephonically. Both parties will be given the relevant contact details.
- Ask as many questions as you like with regard to lifestyle and care of your daughters. They are precious.



5 What if there are problems with the host situation?

- In the *unlikely* event of the child being in any way at risk they can be removed immediately and accommodated by the exchange co-ordinator or by the school counsellor. Another family will be arranged. The child will have support through the process, from the counsellor and co-ordinator.
- The visiting students are provided with contact numbers of the co-ordinator, prior to arrival.
- If it is a matter of different rules or lifestyle causing the tension, there will be facilitation to resolve the situation.
- The visitor's parents will be included in the process.

6 How will my daughter get to and from school?

- The host parent arranges transport for all lifts. The arrangements will be the same as they make for their own children.
- Your child MAY NOT use taxis / mini buses.

7 What academic programme will the visitor follow?

- Individual programmes are arranged for each student a few days after arrival.
- Time and if required, a tutor, are allocated to allow for completion of "home school" work.

- Academic subjects are selected according to the student's interests. These may not be the same as the "home school" subjects.
- *Music* as a subject is offered but there is an additional cost involved. This should be negotiated before and can be paid from the deposit.

8 What about participation in the extra curricular programme?

- The more the visitor joins in, the more she will benefit from the experience. The planned timing of the visit should take into account the student's interests / activities where there are seasonal variations.
- Communication on interests before the exchange will help the co-ordinator make the appropriate arrangements.
- Visiting exchange students are encouraged to visit Refilwe Mission, Albert Street School or one of the agencies supported by the houses at least once as part of a voluntary community service team.



9 Should the visitor bring sports equipment / musical instruments?

- Musical instruments: Yes, if possible. You will be able to communicate directly with the music teacher before the exchange.
- Sports equipment: Bring your own footwear. We can loan you other equipment and clothing but you may prefer to bring your own.

10 What are the recommended times for exchange?

- 11 January – 17 April
- 04 May – 06 July
- 07 September – 26 October

11 What about school uniform?

- Our girls wear school uniform. Visiting exchange students usually wear the St Stithians uniform if they do not have their own uniform. Girls are encouraged to bring their **own uniform in accordance with the weather conditions in South Africa.**
- Uniform is hired from the exchange co-ordinator for a nominal R100.00. The uniform must be returned on departure.
- **BRING YOUR OWN SCHOOL SHOES – FLAT SOLED, BLACK LACE UP SHOES are the uniform.**
- *Bring your own white ankle socks in TERM 1 & 3.*
- *Navy tights are worn in TERM 2. These must be purchased by the student.* The host will help.
- NO JEWELRY or make-up may be worn with uniform.

Term Dates for 2015

- Term 1 14 January to 17 April 2015
Half Term: 12:00 on Thursday, 26 February to 07:00 Tuesday, 03 March
- Term 2 05 May to 07 August 2015
Half Term: 12:00 on Friday, 26 June to 07:00 Monday, 06 July
- Term 3 08 September to 04 December 2015
Half Term: 12:00 on Thursday, 22 October to 07:00 on Tuesday, 27 October

For further information on St Stithians Girls' College, visit the web site
www.stithian.com

For information on International Exchange to St Stithians College, contact the Exchange Co-ordinator:

Girls' College:

Mrs Christine Ashton

Tel: +27 (0) 11 557 6300

Fax: +27 (0) 11 781 2987

E-mail: cashton@stithian.com

