



**3 December 2020**

Dear Saints family

I write my final communication of the year as we move into the Advent season of the Christian calendar. The word 'Advent' originates from the Latin word 'Adventus' meaning 'coming' or 'arrival'. Advent reminds us of the reality of Jesus Christ and that He has arrived, and He is present in our world and lives. During the season of Advent, the Advent candles are lit. There are four candles:

- the first one symbolises hope
- the second candle represents faith
- the third joy, and
- the fourth candle symbolises peace

As a community, it is important that we remain hopeful, faithful, joyful and peaceful in all our interactions. It is also interesting that as we lit the candle of hope, the 12th November edition of The Economist had on its cover, 'Suddenly, hope', this was referring to the news that the world's scientists were on their way to producing a vaccine against the virus that causes COVID-19.

It was also during this time that I welcomed the Grade RR class of 2021. Our little ones are certainly a joyful symbol of hope for the future of this College.

### **Chaplaincy**

#### Superintendent Chaplain

We bid farewell to our Superintended Chaplain, Rev Daniel Nkomo as he retires. We thank Rev Dan for his contribution to the College over the past 16 years. As a member of the College Executive and the College Council, Rev Dan could always be relied on for his sound and wise counsel. He is a man of integrity and deep faith. His presence was always felt. We wish Rev Dan God's richest blessings as he moves into the next chapter of his life.

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa has appointed Rev Jennifer Samdaan as the new Superintendent Chaplain. We wish Rev Jenni all the very best as she takes on the responsibility of Superintendent, ensuring that the spiritual aspect of our College continues to grow. I have no doubt that we will benefit from Rev Jenni's leadership and we look forward to her contribution to this important aspect of the College.

We also welcome Rev Elroy Kekana to the College. Rev Elroy has been appointed as the Chaplain to the Boys' College and begins this chapter of his journey with us in January 2021.

### **St Stithians Online School (SSOS)**

After months of intense and rigorous work we are in the final stages of concluding all requirements necessary in order to ensure the opening of our online school in January.

The College Executive will present the final document to the College Governance Committee and to the Council Executive for final approval.

We have commenced the marketing of our online school, part of this process included interested parties completing an interest form. To date we have had over 1000 people showing an interest in our school. This is a very encouraging response and provides affirmation for our decision to open our 8<sup>th</sup> school.

## **Rescoping of Posts**

### Head of ICT

We have rescoped the Director of Information and Communication Technology position to that of Head of ICT. COVID-19 required ICT representation to the College Executive as the executive team had many technical IT challenges to consider, while transitioning our on-site educational curriculum to an online offering. During the past few months, it has become clear that the role of ICT in our educational offerings is of utmost importance. Furthermore, the approved budget spend on ICT is such that we believe it is critical that the person responsible for managing this budget is a member of the College Executive. We are very pleased that Mrs Marshy Nel, as our Head of ICT, will now become a permanent member of the College Executive reporting to the Rector.

### Head of Educational Research and Innovation

It has been an objective of St Stithians to establish itself as a leading education research institute. The main goal is to enhance, through action research, the implementation of best educational practices across all schools. The introduction of a research unit formally began with the appointment of Dr Adrienne Watson whose portfolio was Deputy Head – Curriculum Research and Innovation, with a dual focus. For structural reasons, at the time, Dr Watson was located in the Girl's Prep (GP) where her two focus areas were Deputy Head Academics in the GP and the establishment of the College as an education research institute. We are excited that Dr Watson moves into the full time position of Head of Educational Research and Innovation as of January 2021.

## **Calendar**

The 2021 and 2022 calendars have been released and can be found on our web page.

## **Release of Matric Results**

The matric results will only be released on Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The late release date is due to the state schools only having their results ready later, as they only finish writing on the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Umalusi Council sets and monitors standards for general and further education and training in South Africa in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework Act No 67 of 2008 (as amended) and the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act No 58 of 2001.

As such, Umalusi needs to verify all results, including government schools and those schools who write the IEB. Only once both sets of results have been verified may they be released.

## **2021 Enrolment via the Secure Portal**

The final date for the completion of the 2021 re-enrolment was the 30<sup>th</sup> of November. We have extended the date to the 4<sup>th</sup> of December.

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## Campus Security

### Access Control

An Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) has been installed together with new booms. All vehicles that were already registered with the College at the time of installation were added to the system. However, there were challenges that you as the community might have experienced:

- The delayed connectivity to the registration plate recognition cameras to open the booms
- Frustration at the gates (time it takes to gain access), when technology is malfunctioning
- Uploading and updating of the online registration forms for access

It is with great pleasure that I inform you, that we have since managed to resolve 95% of the above, however, should you still have further challenges, please contact Deanne Schnaier on 011 577-6381 / opspa@stithian.com (Monday 7h30am to Friday 16h30)

### Car Stickers

Based on the above listed challenges, the College Executive Committee took a decision to keep the protocol of car stickers for 2021, to mitigate any unforeseen technological malfunctioning. The process for issuing and/ or obtaining car stickers is as follows:

- Parents to complete declaration forms on the secure portal
- Once all items show a green tick, vehicle registration details may be updated and confirmed
- Stickers will be available for collection from Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021
  - Mornings 07h00 to 09h00 and
  - Afternoons 12h00 till 16h00
- The above collection will be from the striped marquee on the field in front of the Semono Building/ Operations Building near the Higher Ground Restaurant
- Parents to please bring their original ID or Driver's License when collecting. In the event a driver is collecting on behalf of a parent, a letter and copy of parent's ID is to be sent with the driver giving them permission to sign for the stickers, however, students will not be allowed to collect on behalf of parents
- Current 2020 car stickers will be valid until the end of January 2021
- All registrations confirmed on the secure portal will be uploaded to the number-plate recognition system

### **December 2020 Campus Closure & Exercising on Campus**

As we complete and end yet another term that was filled with challenges, achievements and great memories, please note the following protocols that will be implemented:

#### **Gate Closures**

- Hurlingham, Corlett (Bram Fischer Gate) & Lyme Park Gates, will be closed from the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 and officially open from 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 2021
- One and All Gate (Medfem Gate) will be operational throughout the holidays for access to Higher Ground Restaurant

#### **Exercising on Campus**

It should be noted that as a College we are still adhering to the COVID-19 Lockdown regulations. Up until the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 all our families, parents and students need to follow the protocol of sign up and pre-register, on the link listed below.

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After the 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2020, the protocol would be to sign the register at the Peter Place gate on arrival, the campus is cognisant of the number of people on the campus and some might be turned away. Users are requested to adhere to the following protocols:

- That all COVID-19 requirements and regulations to be adhered to (mask, screening, sanitising and no large groups etc.)
- Only Students, Staff, Parents and Old Stithians Association Members are / will be permitted to utilize the campus
- Only walking (with or without dogs), Jogging or cycling will be permitted around the College Drive (ring road)/ mountain bike track (not on the fields and no sports facilities to be used)
- All those interested in utilizing the above are requested to pre-register, on the link below:  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfRIMEZQKWB8ujBXvm\\_jVRNKHjlnNwCLYeQGLiUicOnPHw5iQ/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfRIMEZQKWB8ujBXvm_jVRNKHjlnNwCLYeQGLiUicOnPHw5iQ/viewform?usp=sf_link)
- All of the above persons / individuals to be screened at the Peter Place Gate, as Peter Place Gate will be the only gate open, between 06h00 – 18h00.

The above protocols will carry through the first term of 2021 until further advised based on the COVID-19 Lockdown regulations and the country's state of disaster.

## PROJECTS

### The following Building and Maintenance Projects were Completed during 2020

- Girls' Prep Classroom Upgrading,
- Grounds Depot,
- Girls' Prep / Girls' College Roof Repairs,
- Remedial work on the Mears Hall eaves
- Grade RR Classrooms (to be completed 31 December 2020),

### Tender / RFQs Adverts to be published (December 2020 /January 2021)

- Procurement of Professional Service Providers,
- Upgrading of the Existing Kitchen Staff Accommodation

## Offices open during the Holidays

The school receptions close on Monday 07<sup>th</sup> December, for any queries relating to the following departments, please call the following numbers:

Department	Contact number	Closes	Opens
Admissions: JP, GP, GC	011-577 6316	Friday, 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	- 04 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
Admissions: BP, BC	011-577 6364	Friday, 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	- 04 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
Finance	011-577 6219	Friday, 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	- 05 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
HR	011-577 6012	Friday, 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	- 05 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
Operations	011-577 6383	Friday, 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	- 04 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
Rector	011-577 6366	Tuesday, 15 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	- 06 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
Seconds	011-577 6045	Thursday, 10 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	- 05 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
Stythian Shop	011-577 6262	Friday, 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	- 04 <sup>th</sup> January 2021

Thank you for walking alongside us this year as we faced the many challenges which came our way. Your support, feedback and encouragement enabled us to turn these challenges into opportunities. These moments have not been easy and I am aware that many in our community felt excluded at times. I remain committed to ensuring that St Stithians remains a place of welcome for all.

C.S. Lewis wrote of the birth of Christ:

“Once in our world, a stable had something in it that was bigger than our whole world.”

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Saviour my wish for you is that the Christmas message of hope permeates your hearts and homes. We celebrate and respect the many different faiths that make up our Saints family. My deep wish is that you and your families find peace and happiness in all that you do as we use this time to reflect on the faith that has brought us through this year and will continue to carry us in 2021.

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” – Luke 2:11

Kind regards

Celeste



**Celeste Gilardi**

**Rector: St Stithians College**

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