



13 March 2020

Dear Saints Family

Campus Security and Projects update

We write this letter to keep you informed about security developments and projects, further to the traumatic armed robbery which took place in the Girls' College carpark during the last week of February, and in taking forward a comprehensive security planning process which began late last year. The overall idea is continuously to improve our security provisions to ensure that the St Stithians campus remains a place of safety.

We thank all who expressed their concerns, shared ideas and offered assistance after the armed robbery. Thank you also to the parents and staff who gave of their time to attend the Security Forum meeting this past week. We are aware that there have been some inconsistencies in the tighter gate control implemented since the end of February and we are committed to correcting these, working to ensure consistency on the part of the guards at the gates.

Some of the aspects outlined below can be implemented in the short-term, while others require planning and allocation of resources. Enhancing the experience of security on our campus is an important priority and attention will be given to fast-tracking where possible.

Access Control

The campus experiences high volumes of traffic between 06h30 and 07h45 and between 13h00 – 14h45 every school day. We understand that the current system of keeping the booms down at peak times is causing much frustration with parents, especially at the Corlett Gate. However, we will continue to implement the approach of keeping the booms down in the greater interests of campus security. We need to implement a faster system of boom activation.

The Campus Security Forum met on 10 March 2020 to discuss the options proposed. A licence plate recognition system linked with RFID tags in authorised vehicles is going to be the best solution. This will allow those users that are registered and recognised by the school to enter quickly as the boom would open as the vehicle approaches the boom. However, anyone not registered on the school database will be stopped and physically scanned in, giving details of their purpose for the visit.

To assist with traffic flows, we will install a system that will allow one of the outgoing lanes at Peter Place to become an incoming lane during incoming peak times, and vice versa during outgoing peak times. This will all be done electronically and quickly. Longer term, we will create additional lanes at the other three gates.

In addition to this we are seriously considering a procedure only to allow visitors to enter the school through the Peter Place gate. In this scheme, visitors to the One & All Club and Higher Ground restaurant would only be allowed to enter through the One & All gate, unless they have already entered through the Peter Place gate.

INSPIRING EXCELLENCE. MAKING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

We will install facial recognition cameras at all the gates for pedestrians that are registered on the database of the College. Any pedestrian not registered will not be allowed to enter until they have been scanned in and have stated the purpose of their visit. This will apply to runners and cyclists accessing the campus.

During core school hours, our plan will be to close the Corlett and Hurlingham gates, requiring access through the Peter Place gate. Access to the school precinct from the One & All gate will also be restricted. This will allow better control and improved security. During school holidays, public holidays and half terms (when there are no events on campus), all gates other than Peter Place and One & All gates will be closed. To allow registered users who walk/run/cycle on the campus, we will install access control pedestrian gates at the Hurlingham and Corlett gates.

The concerns raised over Uber drivers having access into the campus still remain difficult to solve. We have considered several options, such as a drop off / pick up point at the One & All gate, but the distances passengers will need to walk are not reasonable. An alternative and more central pick up point would need to be considered. A significant number of students are using Uber vehicles to arrive and depart from school, arranged by parents.

Contractors will only be allowed to access through Corlett Gate, where every person in the vehicle will be identified and recorded as entering the College for the specific job or project they are contracted for.

All vehicles that enter the campus will be recorded, whether by RFID or Licence Plate Recognition or being scanned in, and all vehicles exiting the campus will be recorded in the same way.

CCTV Cameras and Monitoring

To assist with tracking of vehicles on campus, we are looking to install additional cameras at traffic intersections around the campus.

All CCTV cameras at the gates and in our on-site control room will be monitored off-site as well as on-site, to enable quicker response times and tracking in emergency situations. There are a minority of stand-alone CCTV systems, which will be connected through new fibre installations to the control room. There is an annual phased programme of upgrading the quality of cameras on the campus.

Guards

Each of the gates with one incoming and one outgoing lane will have two guards on duty at all times. We will allow for an additional guard at each school who will patrol the school during the school day, but at drop off and pick up times, they will be based in the carparks.

All guards will be issued with panic buttons to signal an alert to the control room and the mobilising of back-up to the affected area.

Higher Ground Restaurant

The restaurant is a public facility within the One & All Clubhouse and consideration needs to be given to increased security monitoring of this area.

Staff

All St Stithians employees are issued with staff identification cards. It is proposed that we implement the requirement that our staff wear a lanyard with their ID card attached. The staff lanyards will create a visible means of identifying the adults authorised to be on campus, in addition to the uniforms that are worn by employees of contracted companies.

Visitors

We intend to create a system of issuing visitors with colour-coded access cards, depending on which section of the campus they are visiting. The logistics of this system need further exploration with the College Exco and the College Manco.

Panic Buttons

We are engaged in discussion with a company that provides a panic button app on mobile phones, that could be used by staff, parents and senior students – potentially for both medical and security emergencies. There would be a small monthly payment for this added layer of personal re-assurance, with the possibility that the app could be used off-campus as well. The next step, once the system has been tested, would be to survey parents and staff to gauge interest in this service.

Power Back up

The prospect of load-shedding over an extended future period gives rise to the need for alternative power supplies to the gates and security cameras. Various back-up systems are being investigated.

Conclusion

The security of our campus relies in part on each of us playing our role. We request that all who enjoy access to our beautiful campus remain vigilant, report theft and suspicious behaviour to security immediately, lock venues when not in use, and keep valuables safe.

Thank you, One and All, for playing your part.

Yours sincerely



Dr T A Nuttall
Rector



Mrs René Swart
Head of Operations