



## *Uplands College*

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17 September 2008

Dear Parents

The highlight of this term, and indeed the talk of the town, was the production of 'The Untold Fairy Tale'. Annelize Verster, Riegardt Smit and Anita Schonauer, along with several other staff members, are to be congratulated on a fantastic production. However, it could not have reached the heights of success that it did without the support, hard work and dedication of the PTA under the guidance of Andrea Matthews. One of the defining successes of the play was the extent of the pupil participation. Around ¼ of the pupil population was involved in one way or another.

### **Academic Matters**

As we move into the final preparation for the examinations of the new curriculum, and also begin to formalize our subject choices for 2009, we reflect on lessons learned:

- **G12 Results 2008**: The June results were very concerning when the new measurement of academic achievement was applied. These issues are being addressed systematically with the IEB and also by communication to the parents and pupils. The most important message at this stage is that the coming break should be seen as a study break for the Grade 12 pupils. **The Grade 12 end of term reports will be available on Tuesday 23 September.**
- **Subject selection**: The number of pupils who have changed subjects since the beginning of Grade 10 has made efficient resource allocation difficult. We have paid more attention to this process this year, which will, hopefully, result in fewer changes. Due to the significant decisions made by the Board, the finalisation of the subject choices for Grade 10 in 2009 will be made early in the new term.
- The introduction of **Engineering, Graphics and Design** has proven to be extremely popular. It is, however, placing pressure on resources as the original Technology centre is now an Art room. An interim arrangement of some sort is going to have to be made. We can, in future, also only offer one class per year.
- **Business Studies**: This subject continues to grow in popularity. We need to make provision for two classes per grade into the future.
- **Computer Applications Technology**: CAT is not a designated subject but is in high demand. We can only offer one class per year, so will have to reduce the number of pupils making this choice. By contrast, **Information Technology** only has 6 potential candidates and is no longer viable, but as noted in the Chairman's letter, we will investigate the possibility of setting up a Computer Club for the IT enthusiasts as part of the afternoon programme.
- **Physical Science, Geography and Life Sciences (Biology)**: These subjects continue to draw numbers. Each subject will have two classes per year with manageable class sizes.
- **Mathematics and Maths Literacy**: These two subjects continue to be the focus of intense debate. Initially, the expectation was that we would offer one class of Maths Literacy and three classes of Maths. The reality is turning out to be different. We are moving towards a 35% / 65% split between the two subjects. This raises philosophical and practical issues. Philosophically, the school must decide if it is comfortable with its academic profile. Practically, issues are arising because the numbers don't always work out as we would like, so we are ending up with five Maths classes per grade instead of four.

- Dramatic Art: Investigations are now largely complete into the possible introduction of Dramatic Art as a subject in 2009. Eighteen pupils would choose the subject if offered, and the Board has, in principle, agreed to the introduction of Dramatic Art as a subject in 2009.
- Time in Class: The syllabi in all subjects have increased in both breadth and depth. The teachers have looked at all possible ways to maximize time with the pupils. Two strategies that are being implemented are;
  - Firstly, we need to reduce the number of days that are used to write examinations. So in future, we will frequently be writing **more than one exam in one day**.
  - Secondly, in June next year, we will be writing examinations **until the last day of term (Friday 26 June 2009)**. The staff will mark and process reports during the holidays and reports will be issued on the first day of the next term.

### Co-curricular Involvement

The third term has traditionally been difficult from a co-curricular point of view, particularly for girls, but this has not been the case this year. In addition to the Major Production, we have had Girls and Boys Soccer, Girls and Boys Cricket, Girls and Boys Tennis and Girls Hockey to keep everyone busy. I trust you have enjoyed receiving the weekly updates on the activities in the Deputy's Diary.

### Tours, Trips and Exchanges

This side of the school has grown considerably over the past few years. The China and European Tours were enormously successful, while the exchanges to Perth and Woodbridge have been incredible for those involved. The revised Tour Policy is available on our website for your information.

### Discipline

I am pleased to report that we continue to have an overall improvement in terms of the conduct and decorum of our pupils thus far, compared to the previous two years. To put things into perspective, we had 16 disciplinary incidents in 2006 and 19 in 2007. It must be said that not all of them were serious offences in terms of our Code of Conduct, but they did require an investigation, communication with parents, as well as letters stipulating some form of sanction. To date, we had four incidents of serious misdemeanours of some sort.

That which we have learnt from disciplinary issues in the past three years has prompted a comprehensive review our Code of Conduct. The revised code is available on our website for your information.

### Strategic Policy

The process started last year is largely complete. The strategic plan that has resulted has been ratified by the Board and is also available on our website. Your ongoing input would be welcomed.

Enjoy the break with your child and a reminder to the matrices to use the time as productively as possible.

Regards



**Austin Clarke**  
**Headmaster**