

18 January 2010

Dear Parents

The holidays seem to be a distant dream and a new year is upon us. 2010 promises to be a monumental year for South Africa and our continent and we plan for it to be so for our school as well.

I sincerely hope you all enjoyed the brief rest together with your loved ones and wish you and especially your sons a very happy, productive year.

At our first assembly we dealt with the following four steps to help us succeed in all areas of our lives.

1. Set attainable goals/targets
2. Acquire the necessary skills
3. Be positive
4. Persevere

I was pleasantly surprised when questioning a few Grade 5's this morning to find they actually remembered! Please assist us in helping your sons to implement these steps whether it be in their academic, sporting, cultural or social spheres.

Our year, I feel, has got off to a solid start with a minimum of change as regards staffing. Miss Kim Boyd has been appointed permanently in place of Mrs MacCallum and will join the Grade 2's, while Mr George Wienekus moves to his own Grade 5 class. Mr Russell Keet is indisposed at present having undergone a 5 way heart operation and will be away for some while recuperating. We are relieved that all went well and our thoughts are with him as he starts his recovery period. It is somewhat ironic that he is probably the fittest staff member we have! Mrs Cailin McClure has very kindly stepped in during his convalescence and Mrs Kirsty Richards will be relieving for Mrs Calver who is still on accouchement leave - returning in May.

Our school is now a fully-fledged four stream school from Grade 00 to Grade 7. Our intended capacity will therefore be \pm 900 at a class average of 25. You can understand that this situation basically fills the school from Grade 00 and entry into Grade 1 and into the upper grades becomes almost impossible. Should you be in the position of having younger boys or knowing friends who are expecting to make application for grades other than Grade 00, please spread the word that application must be made as soon as possible.

Mr Erik Van Veen and Mr Norman Minnaar who have been working together with a number of stakeholders on the schools 5 year plan are nearing the end of the project and I believe have done an amazing job of assessing where we are and pointing us in the right direction. I thank all those who have given of their time and contributed to the project.

Three areas of the school, which will be given priority this year, are the Information and Technology department, Mathematics and Reading. We wish these to be "standout" areas with staff and pupils working to make this so. To this end all our boys from Grade 4 to 7 will be involved in setting targets and keeping records of the progress they are making throughout the year. I appeal to parents to monitor and encourage their sons to strive for improved performances in all their subjects. The alarming failure on the part of so many matriculants indicates once again the importance of building a firm academic foundation for our boys.

The athletics meeting held on Friday went off without too much disruption despite not having had adequate time to prepare. Rain at the end of last year and again last week made the exercise particularly difficult and I thank the Sports Department for their organisation under trying circumstances.

An agreement has been reached with the Hams Sports Club for the use of their facilities. This will allow us to take off the pressure of our own facilities and in particular to expand our squash numbers to include more juniors.

2010, I know, promises to be a very busy year for all. Selborne is a school which thrives on the support of the parents and the dedicated, enthusiastic staff members who are involved with our boys. All of us are busy but I would ask that each one of us seek out some way to be involved this year. Children succeed, very often because parents are interested and involved – you can be a source of encouragement to staff and a vital contributor to your child's success.

Financing the school and maintaining our standards is a priority of our Governing Body and I encourage you to make timeous payments of fees. We do not wish to get to a stage where we need to reduce staff or cut back on projects. I sincerely thank those who make schooling a priority and support the initiatives of the school sometimes at great personal sacrifice.

Thankfully, our boys are all different, and our only desire as a staff is to witness them develop into young men of highest calibre. We need to work together to achieve this so communication is essential. Staff have been instructed to err on the side of too much rather than too little communication with parents regarding academic and behavioural matters. Please feel free to make appointments with me or the class teacher to iron out any problems which might arise – no matter how trivial.

Last night we welcomed new parents to Selborne at a cocktail party hosted by the PTA. It is always a privilege to meet new friends who have chosen Selborne as the school for their boys. We all look forward to sharing and growing with you in the years ahead.

Please remember the PTA Meeting on Monday 25 January in the hall at 19:00. After a few brief reports and a "chat" by Mr Ken Alston on the state of Education, you shall have a chance to meet with your son's teacher who will inform you more fully of what is expected this year. I encourage you to attend as it is probably the most important meeting of the year.

Congratulations to our Junior Chess players, four of whom made up the Border side: Reuel Videler, Craig Kretzmann, Joshua Miller and Jordan McLoughlin. They achieved an 8th place at the Nationals in Cape Town during the holidays. Dylan Kurten came 7th in the U12 individual section. He has been invited to the SA Closed Chess Tournament.

Dates to remember:

Thurs 21 January	Mom's Committee AGM	Hall	18h30
Mon 25 January	PTA meeting	Hall	19h00
Thurs 28 January	Selborne Supporters (Dads)	Greyhound	18h00

May 2010 be kind to you and yours and come December may the year be remembered for all the right reasons. The Selborne staff and I look forward to sharing with you in developing your most precious possession to "its" full potential.

Kind regards

DOUG VOKE
Headmaster

