



Diversity and Transformation Policy

PREAMBLE

The democratic election in South Africa in 1994 was only the first step, albeit a big one, in the making of a new South Africa. Since then, as a nation, we have struggled to transform the macro and micro social systems that constitute our society, in order to give all South Africans the opportunities to meet their fundamental human needs¹. The South African Constitution and the urgency of transformation together with the abiding ethos and values of Herschel Girls School compel us, as a community, to join with all other components of our society to effect this change. The legacies of apartheid undermine this objective because they continue to contribute significantly to the extremely unequal socio-economic situation in the country and to the ongoing marginalisation of historically disadvantaged people in workplaces, educational institutions and other social spaces. While Government has a responsibility to address the historical imbalances and transform the country, it cannot (and should not) tackle such an enormous and complex problem on its own.

DIVERSITY AND TRANSFORMATION CHARTER

Herschel is an independent, Anglican school with a mission to deliver 'all-round' educational excellence in ways that contribute meaningfully to the transformation of South Africa's society. Herschel fully recognises its responsibility to play its role in the process of redressing the inequalities in society and the marginalisation that some girls could experience within our own school community. With this end in mind, Herschel

- Strives to affirm and celebrate each girl by developing her individual talents, attributes and abilities, and by helping her to learn ways to meet her fundamental human needs better.
- Provides and involves all our girls in a broad range of opportunities that include academic, sport, cultural, community service, spiritual and leadership activities.

¹ According to Manfred Max-Neef (1991) there are nine fundamental human needs. These are subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, relaxation, creation, identity and freedom.

- Expects to deliver and achieve the highest standards in all its pursuits facilitated by the appropriate use of technology and teaching methods, as well as learning and psycho-educational support.
- Is an Anglican School that provides education within the context of Christian belief and practice. Herschel respects all religions and encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of all faiths, whilst preserving and developing its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Anglican Church.
- Embraces positive change while upholding the appropriate Herschel values and traditions
- Recognises that social and economic privilege comes with concomitant responsibilities.

As the Herschel community we live our school values, which include the following:

- Responsibility for self, property and the consequences of our actions.
- Respect in all interactions with members of the school and the broader community.
- The pursuit of excellence.
- Tenacity and competitiveness.
- Equanimity in handling success and failure.
- Tolerance, understanding, kindness and generosity of spirit.

MISSION STATEMENT FOR DIVERSITY AND TRANSFORMATION

To establish and foster a Herschel Girls school environment that:

- Represents the demographic diversity of South African society, especially in relation to “race”.²
- Is inclusive and welcoming to all.
- Encourages learners, parents and teachers to value themselves; respect one another and to appreciate the differences that exist in our society.
- Understands that diversity brings richness and strength.
- Promotes discussion, dissonance and discourse in a safe space, within a framework of ethical and value-based rules, and which leads to a greater understanding of identity, diversity and transformation.
- Offers education for life and is firmly connected to its wider community.
- Clearly communicates a commitment to diversity and transformation so that it is understood, and supported by all members of our school community.

² To remind us that it is a social construct, the word race is between quotation marks where it is first used in this text. Hereafter we drop the quotes in order to facilitate reading and, instead, rely on the reader’s continued awareness of the tension between re-inscribing the idea and acknowledging the inequalities it stands for.

GOAL STATEMENTS FOR PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND TRANSFORMATION

The Herschel Diversity and Transformation Policy should address and cater for all forms of diversity in the process of working for transformation. The immediate transformation priorities will encompass a strong focus on addressing racial diversity in the current goals, as this has been deemed to be the most pressing current area of focus.

The Herschel Diversity and Transformation Policy will be utilised in conjunction with the Herschel Diversity and Transformation Plan, which has a detailed strategy for the implementation of the Diversity and Transformation Policy. It will also be utilised in conjunction with the Herschel Anti-Discrimination Policy, which states that Herschel does not tolerate prejudice, bias or discrimination of any form.

Goal 1:

To address all forms of marginalisation, prejudice and racism that may exist at Herschel and cause Black³ girls, teachers or parents to feel excluded.

Goal 2:

To actively transform the pupil population to better represent the demographic diversity of South Africa, especially in relation to race.

Goal 3:

To actively transform the profile of the Herschel teachers at all occupational levels to better represent the demographic diversity of South Africa, especially in relation to race.

Goal 4:

To ensure that all academic staff are committed to the delivery of a formal and informal curriculum that is of a high standard. The curriculum content, concepts and resources utilised and selected for all pupils from Pre-Nursery to Grade 12, must be relevant, meaningful and appropriate within the context of South Africa and Africa; must address the inequalities of society and marginalisation, as well as the legacy of Apartheid, in an explicit manner, at every opportunity, and in all subjects and teaching.

³ 'Black' is inclusive of all people of colour who are members of groups historically disadvantaged under apartheid. South African legislation regulating employment equity and affirmative action in the workplace defines 'Black people' as 'a generic term which means Africans, Coloureds and Indians', which is intended to encompass all those previously classified as 'African', 'Coloured' or 'Indian' under apartheid. The High Court has also held that people of Chinese descent, who were classified as Coloured under apartheid, must be taken to be included under the definition of 'Black people'. Where the term 'Black' is used in this document, it is intended to refer to the Black people as described above.

Goal 5:

To ensure that Herschel learners and teachers are committed to meaningful Social Responsibility Programmes that promote partnerships with other school communities and engage with our broader community in the Western Cape.

Goal 6:

To actively transform the Herschel Council to better represent the demographic diversity of South Africa, especially in relation to race.

Goal 7:

To assist in the transformation of the South African economy by supporting Black Economic Empowerment-compliant companies in our procurement and tendering policies.

Goal 8:

To include Diversity and Transformation on all future Executive and Council agendas with the express aim of ensuring that these issues are addressed regularly and in a focused and purposeful manner.

Goal 9:

To plan, implement, monitor and report to Council on the Herschel activities relating to these transformation goals.

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