



## Herschel Transformation, Equity and Belonging Report 2020

In composing the report for 2020, it was important to revisit 2017, 2018 and 2019 reports in order to track the progress, initiatives and changes taking place in this critical area for growth at Herschel Girls School. At the outset, we would like to thank Logan Govender and the Committee members and Focus Group Chairs for their detailed reports and sustained focus on this key performance imperative and important aspect of democratization and equity in our country. Education is a powerful transformative tool and space and if we wish to develop the core values of respect, dignity, equality and truth in such a way that they manifestly nurture and shape each young woman's worldview to be a more deeply human one; to be more conscious of the need for diversity and connection and to be able to look outwards and to see a bigger picture, then in partnership with parents, we have an incredible opportunity to grow young South Africans who are equipped to participate more fully and intentionally in the many areas of life in which rich input is needed.

If there is one thing that we have learnt regarding the process of transformation; it is a journey. One of the many academics who reminds us of this is Dr Mamphela Ramphele, well known South African activist, doctor, businesswoman, writer, company director and anthropologist. A journey, by implication, requires preparation and planning; it takes time and it means that one passes through many places and needs to refuel, restock, navigate and press on with the intention being clear; to arrive at a destination. We know that this analogy becomes idealistic when speaking of arrival, but in this metaphor, we envision a safe and happy school which continues to support equity and belonging in equal measure because if that happens, transformation will take place.

In her book, *Laying Ghosts to Rest*, written in 2008, Dr Mamphela Ramphele evaluates South Africa's transformation and assesses progress made in democratisation. She does this by capturing the interest of ordinary citizens, decision-makers and academics alike, educating and challenging each role player to take responsibility for ensuring that the benefits of democracy are enjoyed by all. Fast-forward to 2020 and Dr Ramphele is still intentional about what is required for the changes that South Africa so desperately needs. In an article titled *Changes to schooling that could empower our children in 2020*, she makes no bones about the critical role that education should be playing in transformation, equity and belonging. It is clear that she is tired of the multiple crises in this sector and she writes with her proverbial passion, underpinned by admonishment when she says: *"this is an opportune time to ask some difficult questions about whether we are doing enough to give our country's children the education they deserve. It has been clear for decades that our education sector is in crisis, with all too many children struggling to complete schooling that prepares them for the modern world, Yet we must ask whether the solutions proposed for this challenge address what really ails our school system... The question we should be asking ourselves as a society is why after 25 years of poor-quality education outcomes we are still struggling to confront the root causes of this tragedy? Is there perhaps a mindset that propels us to have low expectations of our children, our teachers and ourselves?*

*What society sets 30% and 40% as pass rates for its children in a modern knowledge-driven global community? What society tolerates 20% absenteeism of teachers on Mondays and Fridays, rising to 33% at every month-end? What society tolerates the culture that has normalised the practice that in schools serving predominantly poor black children only an average 3.5 hours per school day is spent teaching compared to 6.5 hours in the middle and upper-class schools?*

*All children are born with an innate capability to be the best at what interests them provided the environment in the home, community, school and wider society nurtures them with love and support to self-actualise. We have a system failure that results in close to 50% of each age cohort of pupils starting school each year ending up dropping out of school before Grade 12. Of those who write Matric a tiny percentage (14% Bachelor and 12% Diploma passes) ends up with high enough grades to enter tertiary levels studies. The drop-out rate at tertiary is 25% with only 4% of the cohort eventually obtaining a degree.*

*How in the world of the Fourth Industrial Revolution do we think we can be competitive?*

*It is unthinkable that a society that claims to believe in social justice would even contemplate throwing the very children we have failed out of the school system with a meaningless Grade 9 certificate!"*

I have included this extract from an extended article to remind us at Herschel of the incredible advantage pupils enjoy in a well-resourced, independent high fee-paying school. We have a duty to provide perspective and to ensure that the girls and young women who pass through our doors enter full of wonder and curiosity and leave still full of wonder and curiosity because they are excited at the endless possibilities that await them in the next phase of their lives. We also have a duty to remember that we are all members of the society to which Dr Ramphela refers, and that as such and especially as an educational institution, we have the opportunity to contribute far more than we currently do to meaningful change beyond our walls.

In an article written in 2017, for the *Womenstrong, India* Conference, Dr Ramphela wrote the following: *"Africa had to develop the wisdom to survive the uncertainties of evolutionary forces that shaped the world we now call home. Our ancestors understood the inextricable links between human beings. The "I am because you are" – is a profound philosophical orientation that reminds us that human beings are wired for connectedness to others. Rejection, marginalization and humiliation inflict deep wounds on those affected. But we also now know that the wrong-doers in such humiliating marginalization processes emerge as wounded people, too. Resilience in tough environments is re-enforced by mutual respect, complementarity and collaboration."*

When we reflect on 2020, Dr Ramphela's words fall profoundly into a space that we have engaged with in several ways this year. In a year in which we have had to deal with Covid-19, by far the more pervasive and challenging pandemic has been that of systemic racism and discrimination, intensified by the #BLM Movement and polarization in other areas of public life too.

### **Summary of the Timeline of events in Term Two in response to #yousilenceweamplify and the petition both of which were central in the Anti-Racism Social Media Campaign.**

An urgent Council meeting was called for 17h00 to discuss the school's need to respond and act in the wake of the #yousilenceweamplify social media campaign and petition. The ARTT (Anti-Racism Task Team) was established: Logan Govendor, Heather Goedeke, Tracey Dicker, Aaron Ndhluni, Tebogo Skwambane, Tumelo Baloyi, Stuart Harrison and Lin Heidmann (as Head of the Preparatory School) were tasked with the production of an immediate response for the student body and Herschel Community. At this meeting it was decided to take the following actions:

- Produce a full and sincere apology statement in response to the outpouring of experiences lived and felt by students of colour at Herschel (awareness also of staff members of colour and parents of colour).
- Establish an email address/link allowing for the anonymous and safe / direct reporting of racist behaviour / experiences before the end of the week ending 12 June. This would be made known to all stakeholders, past and present at Herschel. This has subsequently been updated to include an email address for Tumelo Baloyi (incoming TEB Chair) so as to ensure external auditing of the site and to ensure that both the Senior School and Preparatory School Head are held to account with regard to the reporting and follow-up required on this site. The reporting mechanism used by UCT is still

under exploration. Heads to follow up with SU on a simpler model for school application. This is an independently monitored mechanism which ensures safe reporting, processing, accountability and consequences.

- Contacting Lovelyn Nwadeyi of L&N Advisors requesting urgent input into discussions/plans for engaging with a sustainable and meaningful whole school approach to racism at Herschel.
- Engaging with ex-student, Emmanuelle Tshala to bring on board discussion points/comments which would assist towards transformation. Meeting made possible when a staff member reached out to Ms Tshala via social media and she agreed to a meeting.
- Council agreed to a zero-tolerance approach to racism at Herschel. It is understood that there are processes that support this stance.
- An Anti-racism Charter would be produced by the staff and students of Herschel and displayed visually throughout the school to serve as a reminder of commitment to what needs to become a lived value. This is complete and will be submitted to Council for approval once it has been translated into isiXhosa and Afrikaans. All students and staff have been afforded the opportunity for input into the document and the document has arisen out of a joint staff/student initiative. It will be shared with parents and the OHA so that all stakeholder groups are included in this critical understanding of what Herschel stands for.
- School Management would focus on a shift to operationalizing policy across all areas of school life to inform decision-making and to support the central concept of belonging.

**TERMS 3 AND 4, 2020** – We distilled plans with L&N Advisors and planned implementation with small groups of all stakeholders, including the urgent needs listed below, as part of our strategy to address TEB at Herschel:

1. **We recognized the need to bring all parents to the table** – we know the importance of engaging openly and urgently around the need for parents to partner with the school on anti-racism at Herschel. Parents need to be met where they are and then through the process of engagement / regular presentations / webinars and the reading of recommended texts (and subsequent discussions (perhaps within grades) being brought into the process of change. There are parent concerns, fears and uncertainties which need to be shared and addressed. Parent webinars could be a useful tool in developing discussion/contributions and some continuity. (Not 'once-offs').
2. **We recognized the importance of all Herschel pupils being at the centre of Herschel's strategy** – we needed smaller group meets; student leadership support and feedback + age-appropriate curriculum interventions throughout the school. We identified the need to develop language toolkits; racial literacy and social justice concepts that could be championed and understood within their complexities. This required revisiting the current curriculum and considering adaptations to the timetable at Herschel Senior School to ensure that our pupils are educated in issues of humanity and identity, and not just in the academic 'silos' with a strong focus on achievement measurable in "A" symbols. Further considerations included, but were not limited to mental health, physical health, balance, and an empathy curriculum. We acknowledged that the legacy of TEB being pupil-driven needed to be replaced by a structure which supported student initiative in this space, but which remained the responsibility of School Management.
3. **Staff development and growth needed to include all cohorts of staff:** (Admin, Maintenance, the managers of the respective outsourced staffs – Origin, Security staff and Cleaning staff – academic staff groups). We discussed the fact that staff support groups needed to be smaller and needed to meet regularly; with ongoing staff development as part of the school day, supported by the parents' recognition of a need for this to be built-in for sustainable professional and personal development

and enrichment. Staff need to be equipped with the toolkits / racial literacy to enable discussion, growth and experiential learning in the classroom and to support the transformation process. In this regard all staff engaged with Lovelyn Nwadeyi's critical racial literacy modules and this has opened the possibility of further learning and growing in order to support the change that we want to see and feel at Herschel.

**4. Reporting mechanisms for any act of racism and/or discrimination needed to be safe and anonymous by all pupils and staff.**

We discussed the development of safe and effective (measurable) mechanisms and processes for the reporting of racism at Herschel and for the support of students experiencing uncertainty, requiring assistance, intervention. The email address that has been established is working effectively and now has a further 'landing space'. Chair of TEB: Tumelo Baloyi will monitor this independently to ensure that both school heads are also included in the monitoring process. This needs to be communicated to the pupils, staff and parents as an update. In the meantime, we are following up on a toolkit that Stellenbosch University designed for use at UCT. The costing of this mechanism remains a barrier, but we hope to be able to use a simplified version which is still highly effective.

**5. Recruitment strategies for all staff needed to be clear and intentional, especially on the part of the Senior School.** The Head of HR, Andrew Scott, in conjunction with the TEB Staff Recruitment and Retention Focus Group, has ensured that the strategy for recruiting staff is consistent and that we advertise widely to ensure a greater reach. We have found success via social media platforms, word of mouth and the ISASA Vacancies site. At least 50% of the candidates shortlisted are of colour and the questions raised by members on the panel, incorporate aspects of TEB and have been reframed to support a greater scope of response.

**6. Council and School Management needed to check on their alignment with regard to TEB strategy.**

We recognized the need to establish clear and transparent roles and lines of communication between Council and Management in this space; and to bring Council into discussions and a broader-based conversation around transformation, equity and belonging. We believed that the School Management should drive transformation operationally and as a key imperative; with Council playing a support, strategic, oversight and governance role. The TEB committee included all stakeholders and was doing this work. The gap was that it was not being implemented at school management level. Furthermore, the Focus Groups needed re-evaluation to ensure that implementation occurred through school management.

**7. Lin Heidmann, Logan Govender and Heather Goedeke met to discuss the 'vehicle' for TEB at Herschel.** We all realized that for this to be successful and to embed itself, we required broad-based participation from ALL stakeholders; excellent and ongoing feedback and communication and measurable outcomes through surveying all stakeholder groups and assessing the effectiveness of mechanisms and processes.

**8. The role of the Old-Herschelians in TEB conversations and strategy needed clarity.** We worked through Kristina Miller to engage directly with the OHA around the need for transformation, equity and belonging at Herschel. Kristina invited participation and contributions. Emmanuelle Tshala has subsequently agreed to assist in the diversification of the OHA as an ex-pupil. Her advice/input resonates strongly with our wish to take a broad-based approach; to build trust, to hold ourselves to account through measurables and to focus on effective, meaningful and ongoing transformation through clear and open communication and through focusing on building relationships.

9. **The Student Transformation Mission Document was presented by students (having been started at the end of 2017):** Logan Govender thanked the Grade 12s (in absentia) for the thought and effort they put into preparing the comprehensive document on their lived experiences at Herschel. The custodianship of this will be assumed by the current Grade 11s. Logan Govender thanked student leadership for the heart that they have put into it to make Herschel a better school for all those who attend. He reiterated the school's appreciation for the students' insights and indicated that we would try to implement as many of the suggestions as possible. Anna von Willingh, in particular, was thanked for her writing of the final aspects of this important student document and contribution to TEB. Tracey Dicker thanked student leadership for their mature response and commitment to TEB at Herschel, despite it being a difficult year for them. There is alignment between the objectives of the TEB and the STM. The key shift here is one from policy to operation. Pupils recognised the need to take policy to an operational level so that it impacted on what students experienced on a daily basis.

The Heads noted that this extensive document focused on implementation and undertook to see how we could incorporate this document into existing policy and, furthermore, take into account recommended actions from Lovelyn Nwadeyi, Ms Asanda Ngoasheng and Ms Julie Nxadi after their respective planned engagements.

Student leadership reported that the change that they expected to happen within the policy framework did not materialise owing to the gap in implementation and this also explained their lack of trust in the system.

All areas of engagement, sport, culture and spirituality, for example, wanted meetings between themselves and staff members who oversee areas, to discuss the integration of some of the key considerations of the STM and core areas of operation at school. The Spirituality Committee, for example, had a productive meeting with Rev. Lavarello-Smith in which they focused on what could be implemented and changed immediately, what constituted medium-term planning and what required long term planning. Most areas have now had at least one meeting, with some departments having had up to three meetings with pupils, to discuss implementation. Of particular value in terms of Herschel being an educational institution is an investigation of the curriculum. Several meetings across the various Subject Departments have taken place to discuss the need to add to the current curriculum and to consider the relevance and currency of what is being taught. The Heads are looking forward to what will come from this. Lin Heidmann noted the joy she felt while going through this document and said that she felt that staff have accepted the document. There was a stop, look, read and discuss approach taken in the Preparatory School. We agreed that it is the teachers' responsibility to drive this change. ("It's time that the staff take this on and lead this"). Both Heads thanked the pupils with Lin Heidmann reiterating that she has loved watching the senior pupils become the heroes of the younger girls. Logan Govender's comment about transformation not being a black person's problem to solve, was one taken note of. TEB should be a collective responsibility of all at the school.

### **Subsequent ARTT, TEB and PEG Meetings 2020 – Actions and decisions taken**

There have been several meetings (every two to three weeks for the most part) for the ARTT. These meetings have been productive and rigorous, and we are grateful to all for the time that was given to this. We are certain that the personal growth, passion, sincerity and friendship experienced during these meetings has been a highlight in the engagement and planning process. It has enriched all members and has brought members of Council and the Heads closer. We need to ensure that this sense of collaboration and enrichment now extends to all pupils who attend Herschel. Michelle Sylvester raised the point that transformation cannot be done by one person. Under her leadership the Senior School started a reading group by way of an online platform where they share webinars and have conversations and her point has been noted.

1. WhatsApp group protocol needs to be communicated clearly. It also needs to be equally accessible and to apply equally to all stakeholders. It came to our attention that some parents of colour have indicated that sometimes on a WhatsApp group they want to comment but they do not have the courage to voice their opinions. We need to ensure that all parents feel that they can share their viewpoints. This further consolidates the need to focus on the sense of belonging. Since Whatsapp is a platform used extensively (and especially during this disrupted year of Covid-19) it is important that this become an inclusive, safe space for all Herschel stakeholders.
2. We need to disrupt the trend whereby people of colour are generally expected to 'educate' white people with regard to matters of TEB. Pupils have pointed this out as an ongoing frustration and there may well be parents feeling the same way.
3. Pupil leadership representatives on the TEB: The head of Transformation and the Head Girl attend TEB meetings. The exact structure of how student representation will look on TEB going forward is still being finalised, but Heather Goedeke has discussed this with Michelle Sylvester and the current pupil leadership, as well as the 2021 pupil leadership team.
4. Pupils have welcomed the finalisation of the Hair Policy, the introduction of the headscarf for Muslim pupils who choose to wear one, and the introduction of a Muslim spiritual group which will be overseen by Yaasien Kerbelker, a member of staff.
5. Pupils are also heartened at the focus that will be placed on safe spaces going forward. There will be more formal discussion, with advice from Lovelyn Nwadeyi, regarding the role / support of affinity groups at Herschel. It is critical to support safe spaces for pupils who wish to discuss matters that are specific to them. Michelle Sylvester has engaged with this and we will continue with this discussion in 2021.
6. A meeting with senior students and Council took place in June. The Heads were grateful for the support that Tebogo Skwambane, Tumelo Baloyi and Aaron Ndhuni provided to senior pupils. What emerged from the meeting is that teachers need to care more for their pupils. The mental health of pupils under ongoing pressure requires special attention. (Specific reference made to the senior deputy head and academic pressure as an illustration of this, has been addressed). The pupils discussed the need for Council to rebuild trust with them (through delivery). The meeting left them feeling hopeful and a start in this direction has been made. Some questions were asked as to the composition of Council, terms of office, specific roles and accountability and the maximum term of office. This is also being addressed with a view to governance and composition.
7. Pupils were encouraged to engage directly with the Heads. Points to note for ongoing engagement included inter alia: a link between the competitive pressure at Herschel and racism and whether this pressure exacerbated racism, racism being experienced as a series of covert, ongoing /subtle behaviours which need to be addressed at staff and pupil levels, pupils of colour who do achieve being "seen" whereas those who do not are perceived as "just being there". Pupils stressed the need to correct the channels of communication and to ensure that reporting mechanisms are safe and trusted. Allyship was viewed as being critical to the change process at Herschel. (The need to teach students how to be allies in the fight against racism was a point made by pupils across all grades). Once the questions and certain points had been answered and clarified the conversation shifted towards personal experiences and feelings and it was an emotional experience (for members of Council and pupils) listening to and receiving these experiences. Heather Goedeke was asked to communicate pupil feedback to Lovelyn Nwadeyi for her information with the intention of Lovelyn including specific interventions in her proposal around pupil engagement to identify the impediments to engendering trust and how both Council and management could respond with direct interventions. Although pupils wanted a further meeting with Council, this did not happen. It is through no fault of Council. This will be set up for the start of 2021 as not only does it provide an incredible area of support for pupils, but it builds connection between the pupil body and Council.

### **Feedback from the Heads following their meetings with Lovelyn Nwadeyi after her facilitation:**

Both Heads found the feedback from Lovelyn Nwadeyi exceptionally valuable and focused. She provided them with detailed feedback after the sessions she held via Google Meet (with a view to an in person visit as a 'hands on' follow-up). Lovelyn Nwadeyi visited Herschel for a week at the end of July to engage with stakeholder groups to prepare and support them for transformation, through educating, dismantling and ensuring that personal journeys involving reflection and change (unlearning and relearning) provide an opportunity for real and meaningful change. A restorative justice approach was favoured but not exclusively focused on. A five-pronged approach was described thus:

1. A curated process to support staff on their personal journey (staff education identified as a critical need).
2. Equipping students to critically engage with identity.
3. Targeted support for parent education and engagement
4. Reflection and capacity-building opportunities within and across racial groups.
5. Establishment of / review of accountability structures and mechanisms for the school.

Lin Heidmann's comment about the structure that came with Lovelyn Nwadeyi's proposal, was felt in the delivery of the workshops and facilitation. Lovelyn Nwadeyi's intervention was welcomed by all pupils who have subsequently asked if she can return in 2021 to help them to continue the conversations that held such value.

While Heather Goedeke was asked to distribute the proposal to the ARTT 3 July to allow Tebogo Skwambane to review and advise on this proposal based on her consulting background, this was an area that did not follow the prescribed channels. The ARTT was tasked with recommending the proposal to Council for approval, subject to Tebogo Skwambane's review, and Finance Committee's approval. Heather Goedeke did not get the costing to Tebogo Skwambane timeously but understands the need for this going forward to ensure that the scope is clear, costing fair and the processes costed in accordance with industry norms.

### **Independent Inquiry into allegations made via social media campaign:**

Scope: Logan Govender originally enquired as to whether the ARTT was going to recommend that there be an independent investigation into some of the incidents mentioned on social media and experiences relayed by students. This was widely supported as a necessary and important action and it was determined that the ARTT would determine whether there were specific incidents which required sensitive, professional engagement. Proposals were made and the scope of the investigation was drawn up to ensure a proper outcome. There needed to be genuine care with regard to the seriousness with which the school viewed the allegations.

Logan Govender, Tracey Dicker, Heather Goedeke and Lin Heidmann, as well as all members of the ARTT and Emmanuelle Tshala, looked at the incidents logged to support the scope of the investigation. Tracey Dicker compiled a list of suitable candidates to assist the school and we were fortunate to secure the services of John Riley, together with Adv N Bawa NC and Adv N Mayosi. The Inquiry started in October. There have been several meetings, involving all stakeholders, and past and present staff members and pupils, and we await the recommendations of the report (which we hope to receive by the end of November).

### **Anti-Racism Charter**

The Heads coordinated the set up for a collaborative approach to this important document. The original working group constituted two Pre-Prep staff, four Prep staff, four Senior School staff, two pupils from each grade in grades 7 – 12 plus the two heads: 24 people. A starting point was provided through a selection of

documents/statements. After the first meeting, it was decided that smaller groups would be more practical and all material was collated in a Google document, with a small group meeting to distil this into the current charter statement. We are grateful to the staff and pupil group who structured the final draft. The charter is being translated into isiXhosa and Afrikaans and will then be distributed to the Herschel community. The charter is a pledge / an undertaking to uphold a zero-tolerance stance. It is underwritten by the TEB policy and the anti-discriminatory policies. It will constitute a declaration of what Herschel stands for.

### **Accountability framework:**

Stuart Harrison suggested that Herschel should focus on all forms of discrimination. Having reviewed the policy for sexual harassment (supplied by UCT for our review), he agreed that there was value in following a similar structure as the policy provided useful parallels. Stuart Harrison also emphasized that there needed to be scope within the policy for raising a complaint/grievance in multiple ways. Likewise, pupils need to have a choice regarding a formal / informal process. Standards of behaviour need to be clearly outlined so that there is a clear understanding that we do not tolerate racist conduct.

Both Logan Govender and Stuart Harrison, together with the Heads, supported the need for the reporting process to expand beyond the email reporting mechanism which was put in place. Kristina Miller helped with a monitoring framework restructured in the context of what we do. The accountability framework must also apply to the Heads of the school that are implementing the transformation plan of the school, including the establishment of targets in relation to the goals particularly student, teacher and Council recruitment. Heads need to report on these goals at TEB and Council meetings. Tumelo Baloyi (incoming Chair of TEB) will monitor this independently and has been added to the reporting mechanism to ensure that the Heads do not 'sit outside' of being accountable.

This allocated responsibility to Heads and oversight to TEB and Council.

**Alignment of staff at Herschel:** A critical question we needed to ask ourselves was how we would ensure that staff aligned themselves with the detail/philosophy and rationales for the policies put in place for hair, uniform, spirituality, identity and so on. This will require ongoing monitoring and working closely with staff and there will be further engagement with all staff at the start of 2021.

### **Short term action items supporting belonging which were achieved in June/July 2020:**

- a) Hair policy – simple policy ensuring that cultural identity is protected within the space
- b) Uniform policy – need to address aspects of gender, body comfort and identity
- c) The introduction of the head scarf for Muslim pupils who choose to wear it.
- d) Facilitation with Lovelyn Nwadeyi
- e) Council's session with pupil leadership – building relationship

### **Prep Students sessions (observations from Lovelyn Nwadeyi)**

Preparatory Pupils: The Grade 7 session was primarily focussed on gauging where the pupils themselves were in terms of the recent discussions about the #BlackLivesMatter movement and the debate that this had unearthed regarding #AllLivesMatter. Lin Heidmann discussed the broad range of sentiments that emerged through this engagement. Most of the pupils indicated an awareness and understanding about what they had just learned, many – perhaps unconsciously – fell back on stereotypical methods of explaining or reading social relationships between racial groups as seen in the following:

- Consistent references to “nannies” and domestic workers who had been part of their families for several years and whom they love so much, albeit noting the differences in experience and equality between them and their domestic workers.



- Suggestions that the current crime rate in South Africa is because *'black people had their homes taken away from them before so obviously they would have to steal now in order to look after their families.'*
- Many of the pupils indicated an awareness of the unfair nature of the relationships between their parents and the domestic workers in their homes, or the ways in which their parents have made stereotypical comments and gestures.

### Senior Students sessions (Observations by Lovelyn Nwadeyi)

Senior Pupils: Sessions covered the basics of Racial Literacy with a specific focus on Privilege, Micro-aggressions and Normative Culture.

- Pupils commented on representation and diversity in terms of the teaching staff and the management body
- A need for a more inclusive and diverse curriculum – pupils indicated that they didn't want these types of sessions to be auxiliary to their learning and education
- A hope that the school would institute regular mechanisms for checking in with pupils about their experiences at the school, rather than to hold conversations about racism as part of "damage control".

Lovelyn Nwadeyi noted:

- A clear sense of polarisation between the pupils of colour and the white pupils both in terms of who spoke, when they spoke and how they spoke, but also in terms of how they were seated. A particularly, poignant and hard-hitting comment came from one of the pupils of colour who spoke to Lovelyn Nwadeyi afterwards: *"For many of our white peers, this is just a workshop. For us, this is our lives."*
- The need for conversational tools for how to have these discussions with parents who held different views.
- The need for open discussions about teacher-to-pupil racism as well as racism against staff members of colour;
- Conversations about ways in which to make the school truly more inclusive
- Unpacking white fragility even as it manifests among them as pupils

Lovelyn Nwadeyi recommended facilitation with the current Grade 11s to ensure that they repair and maintain relationships among themselves and can lead the school as a grade in the upcoming year. They'll need time to work apart in affinity groups and to come back together and process where they are as a grade. She also suggested that a combined staff-pupil session would also be valuable as a way of addressing the current distrust that exists between pupils and their teachers.

Lovelyn Nwadeyi believes that there are some concerning issues regarding the power dynamics between adults and children.

*This sense of victimhood is also a manifestation of white fragility and will require ongoing personal mastery and a commitment to unlearning certain patterns of internalised superiority in order to overcome this hinderance in the journey.* (This is critical to moving forward and to self-growth and self-knowledge).

Apropos parents, it would be good to continue with the planned parent education interventions, as well as the relevant parent portal and sharing platforms that are already underway at the school. Furthermore, Lovelyn Nwadeyi suggested that it would be valuable to include teachers in the parent education process, especially around issues of mother-tongue teaching and learning at the early ages (relevant to the Prep School).

## Areas of focus for 2021:

1. The distillation of clear values for Herschel Girls School – the bedrock of strategy
2. Development of a clear implementation plan for TEB which operationalizes TEB across all aspects of school life and experience. The constitution of the TEB Committee needs finalization.
3. Monitoring systems for students and teachers (surveys)
4. Monitoring systems for Council to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of TEB by the Heads of the school.
5. Safe/trusted reporting mechanisms for racist/discriminatory experiences.
6. PEG: The Parent Portal will be activated shortly and we will need to market this and to monitor its reach and effectiveness, getting feedback and ensuring that we address a range of topics.
7. The ongoing diversification of the OHA will need our support
8. The make-up of the TEB Committee needs to be finalized (Pupil representation, for example)
9. Results of the Independent Inquiry to be shared with the Herschel Community
10. Accountability framework for all Council members at Herschel: looking at clearly defined roles on Council and at expected standards of behaviour and alignment with the school's policies, as well as the nominations process so that there is clarity from the outset. In view of Logan Govender's resignation from Council, Tracey Dicker will see through this initiative.
11. Continued focus on pupil access and support – bursaries and scholarships – the current approach requires reform.
12. Staff and Pupil access to Herschel and support (once at the school). Recruitment and onsite support remain critical aspects of a staff diversification strategy. We need to guard against 'passive' assimilation and to see the representation of staff of colour as individualistic, not defaulting to a 'spokesperson.' Likewise, diversification applies to the student space and we need to consider that we all come from rich diverse backgrounds in terms of religion, culture, experiences and value systems.
13. Places and spaces – language, artworks, buildings, iconography, symbols and design need to be considered carefully in the lead-up to the school's centenary and as we move forward. How can we reflect a sense of belonging to all those who work and learn at Herschel?
14. Curriculum – the ongoing decolonization, together with the intentional application of diversity as enrichment
15. To rethink community engagement so that Herschel becomes part of a larger environment in a more real and measurable way, and not an 'island' in the Southern Suburbs. We do have a fairly extensive programme/reach, but how/where can we share more?
16. As we enter the next 100 years of Herschel, we need to consider the school's identity. We need to own an African identity – IEB independent curriculum enables this. (The IB has outstanding pedagogy, but is essentially Eurocentric because that is its genesis).
17. Ultimately it would be great to be viewed as an innovative school, leading transformation, equity and belonging in the school space. How do we grow leadership in TEB amongst teachers, pupils, parents, the OHA and Council?
18. Conscious conversations - parent, staff engagements around texts, videos, movies. On campus. Training for this will begin at the start of 2021.

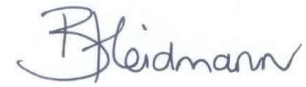
It is appropriate at this point to thank Logan Govender for the enormous leadership role he has played in conceptualising and drawing up policies to support TEB at Herschel. Logan's commitment to transformation has been significant and we are grateful to him for the time, focus and energy with which he has led in this space.

In the words of Martin Luther King, Jr: ***An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.***

This bigger view of responsibility needs to guide us and inspire us as we journey towards a more diversified, inclusive, happy and safe Herschel.

Heather Goedeke

Lin Heidmann



(Head)

(Preparatory Head)

## ANNEXURE 1

### CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS MAY / JUNE 2020 in response to #Yousilenceweamplify and petition

**Friday 29 May** – #St John’s, #Herschel Deafening Silence” Instagram post appeared on Facebook and was brought to our attention. We looked out for further responses over the weekend but the sites were quiet.

**Tuesday 2 June** – The trending black square was posted on the Herschel Facebook page in solidarity with schools across the country. It was viewed as a performative action and the school was called out.

**Wednesday 3 June** – The social media posts notifications were muted late evening (around 10h45 pm) at which point the “yousilenceweamplify” post took off. It was supported (commented on and shared) by past and current students.

Heather Goedeke met with Grade 12 leadership (S Pitman, S Reddy-Mbewu, M Todd and A von Willingh) to discuss these events and planned to meet Grade 12s on Friday, 5 June.

**Thursday 4 June** – Social media sites were all reopened at around 09h00 with all comments/responses intact. A quick response was posted as an interim acknowledgement of the campaign. There was further backlash because this was perceived to be placatory as opposed to apologetic. NOTHING was deleted by the school on the sites re-opened. It was important to emphasise this, especially with regard to the concept of freedom of speech which underpins the South African democracy. A petition was started (by Emmanuelle Tshala, ex-Herschel pupil) and gained traction immediately. This was supported by past and current students and spread to schools across the country. EWN asked for a response from the school by Friday 5 June.

**Friday 5 June:** The Media statement was supplied to EWN at 12h00. (There was input from the Council and Heather Goedeke, as Head). Heather Goedeke met with the Grade 12 leadership. The response also moved to several other schools when pupils tagged their schools and each other off the “yousilenceweamplify” site.

**Sunday 7 June** – An urgent Council meeting was called for 17h00 to discuss the school’s need to **respond and act**. The ARTT (Anti-Racism Task Team) was established: Logan Govendor, Heather Goedeke, Tracey Dicker, Aaron Ndhluni, Tebogo Skwambane, Tumelo Baloyi, Stuart Harrison and Lin Heidmann (as Head of the Preparatory School) were tasked with the production of an immediate response for the student body and Herschel Community. At this meeting it was decided to take the following actions:

- **Produce a full and sincere apology statement** in response to the outpouring of experiences lived and felt by students of colour at Herschel (awareness also of staff members of colour and parents of colour). Logan Govender and Heather Goedeke worked on this statement, with the Committee providing input and the statement was passed through the ARTT before it was released. It had to be published within two days (Tuesday 9 June).
- **Establish an email address/link allowing for the anonymous and safe / direct reporting of racist behaviour / experiences** before the end of the week ending 12 June. This would be made known to all stakeholders, past and present at Herschel. This has subsequently been updated to include an

email address for Tumelo Baloyi (incoming TEB Chair) so as to ensure external auditing of the site and to ensure that both the Senior School and Preparatory School Head are held to account with regard to the reporting and follow-up required on this site.

- **Heather Goedeke was tasked with contacting Lovelyn Nwadeyi** of L&N Advisors requesting urgent input into discussions/plans for engaging with a sustainable and meaningful whole school approach to racism at Herschel.
- **Lin Heidmann and Heather Goedeke engaged with ex-student, Emmanuelle Tshala** to bring on board discussion points/comments which would assist towards transformation. Meeting made possible when a staff member reached out to her via social media and she agreed to a meeting.
- **Council agreed to a zero-tolerance approach to racism at Herschel.** It is understood that there are processes that support this stance.
- An **Anti-racism Charter** would be produced by the staff and students of Herschel and displayed visually throughout the school to serve as a reminder of commitment to what needs to become a lived value. This is complete and will be submitted to Council for approval once it has been translated into isiXhosa and Afrikaans. All students and staff have been afforded the opportunity for input into the document and the document has arisen out of a joint staff/student initiative. It will be shared with parents and the OHA so that all stakeholder groups are included in this critical understanding of what Herschel stands for.

**Monday 8 June** – Heather Goedeke met with student leadership to discuss plans for the week in a student discussion and Q&A session. We maintained communications with Lovelyn Nwadeyi regarding possible term-end ‘meets’ to assess where Herschel was at. We recognized the need for all stakeholder groups: Council, Parents, Staff, Students and ex-Herschelians to be involved if a sustainable approach was to be achieved.

**Tuesday 9 June** – The Gr 11s returned to school when permission was obtained from the WCED. Junior Grades returned to the Prep too. Heather Goedeke addressed Grade 11s on the Social Media Anti-Racism Campaign and spoke briefly to some of the immediate actions being taken. This was followed by the further return of several grades in the Prep School with Covid-19 protocol debriefings all round.

13h00 – 14h30: Meeting at Herschel with Emmanuelle Tshala (creator of the petition), Tebogo Skwambane (Council Member and ex-Herschelian), Lin Heidmann (Prep Head), Heather Goedeke (Head), Shannon Pitman (Headgirl), Semane Reddy-Mbewu (Deputy Headgirl), Michaela Todd (Deputy Head girl) and Anna von Willingh (Prefect: Diversity Portfolio). This was a constructive meeting. Importantly, Emmanuelle expressed a willingness to be involved in a broad-based task team to move Herschel forward. Lin Heidmann expressed concern that the issue was not limited to Senior School but was a whole school issue and we realized the urgent need to pick up on this. (Owing to the social media campaign and the platforms used, the focus fell on the Senior School).

We held an Assembly at 14h50: Student leadership read the Anti-Racist Statement compiled by student leadership. The Chair (Tracey Dicker) and Deputy-Chair of Council (Logan Govender) joined us to read the official apology and statement in response to the anti-racism campaign in a live-streamed assembly. This was a very emotional time.

A Senior Exec Meeting was convened for 15h50, at which Heather Goedeke provided an overview of events that had taken place. While we had effectively been in ‘Crisis management mode’, we recognized the need now for a wider and more participatory approach. We also communicated a need for flexibility on the timetable to enable discussions to take place in response to the social media campaign. School student leadership led these discussions and the Exec team agreed to accommodate this, recognizing the need for immediate engagement.

**Wednesday 10 June:** At the weekly MANCO Meeting we discussed a far more participatory way forward with regard to Transformation, Equity and Belonging. Lin Heidmann expressed the feeling that the Preparatory School felt a little out of the loop, while acknowledging the challenges of timing, especially in the Prep School where staff cannot leave classes (and being short-staffed owing to staff members with co-morbidities not being present). There was considerable discussion around approaches we needed to take. (Covid-19, permissions for deviation from the DBE planned re-entry dates for other grades; financial update with regard to fees collection, challenges at staff level with regard to numbers on the ground in the Prep and a need to procure two locum teachers for Term 3 in order to cover all bases, staff members with co-morbidities to receive communication regarding the need to have measures in place for Term Three – ISASA regulations and discussions) were also pressing issues that required actioning. I include these to provide context and to describe the pressured time that this was for the school.

**Thursday 11 June:** 15h00 – 16h30: Senior School staff meeting – Heather Goedeke brought staff up to date through a discussion around experiences and a general sense of there being a need for a collaborative, nuanced, embedded approach to racism. There was strong consensus that there is no quick fix. Intention, focus and participation were all viewed as being crucial to changing the culture at the school. We spoke of operationalizing TEB as opposed to seeing it as a separate strategic KPI.

**Friday 12 June:** There was a meeting with Lin Heidmann and Andrew Scott (Logistics in the Prep regarding staffing). Acknowledgement of the challenges of co-managing Covid-19 with the required protocols and staffing cohorts; as well as the bigger challenge of responding urgently but collaboratively to the Social Media Anti-Racism Campaign by devising a sustainable strategy across the whole school. Recognition of the frustrations around limited meeting numbers (social-distancing regulations) as a result of the Covid-19 rulings in place. This impacted on our ability to hold discussions with each grade, for example. In a time of crisis, it would have been much easier not to have had to follow the stringent Covid-19 protocols which made communication a challenge.

15h00 – ISASA webinar – Heather Goedeke was asked to share some of the experiences of the last week with Heads from other ISASA schools, who also shared their schools' experiences. Lin Heidmann (SAHISA Chair) managed regular Friday webinars which proved valuable as a learning space for many subsequent discussions.

17h00 – 18h30: L&N Webinar where Senior and Prep Execs and Heads met with Lovelyn Nwadeyi to enable her to get to know the Execs in the interests of being able to start engaging with an informed, enriched and sustainable response to making Herschel into a happy, safe space where every pupil identifies with the school and feels that she belongs. Lin Heidmann, Andrew Scott and Heather Goedeke left the forum to allow Exec to speak to Lovelyn independently and freely. The entire process had to be transparent if it was going to succeed long term in shifting the culture at Herschel.

**Saturday 13 June:** Lovelyn provided Lin Heidmann and Heather Goedeke with valuable feedback regarding points raised by the respective Execs. This will inform the way Herschel move forward. Both Heads acknowledged the need to meet in smaller groups to really engage meaningfully and inclusively with all staff members and a decision was made to hold off on a staff webinar until later in the year.

While the TEB had in place several focus groups working within a clear policy framework, we saw the need to create greater awareness; together with actioning policy, finalizing the charter and committing to zero-tolerance of racism at Herschel. Measurables would include surveys, the data provided via the email link for reporting racism at Herschel, student feedback, staff feedback, parent feedback and multi-stakeholder involvement. (This is an area that requires more focus in 2021).

We provided reports to the TEB Sub-Committee for submission to Council to hold Management to account in terms of the ongoing initiatives, focus and intervention being actioned and implemented. In this regard, Kristina Miller provided a tool for the measurement and tracking of initiatives which has been useful.

**Sunday 14 June:** Lin Heidmann and Heather Goedeke met to discuss the events of the past few days. We were cognizant of a lack of communication to the whole school and of our need to connect as a whole school and to be more intentional (albeit within the context of Covid-19). Heather Goedeke was asked to address this. We held a good discussion about the way forward with L&N Advisors who encouraged us to acknowledge the need to step back and to see the 'whole picture' so as to respond to the big picture and to ensure maximum input into the strategy and implementation. This was a critical moment in the response to what had now moved beyond being a crisis, to a core strategic focus (with a multi-pronged approach) for Herschel.

**Sunday 14 June:** Lin Heidmann and Heather Goedeke 'met' via a Google Meet to discuss Lovelyn Nwadeyi's feedback from our respective Execs. At this same meet we finalized the week that was to follow (15 – 19 June).

**Monday 15 June:** We saw additional grades returning to the Preparatory School. Lin Heidmann engaged with the PEG (Parent Education Group) regarding the response to an Instagram post about discussion and facilitation. It was here that we started discussions around what role the PEG had played up until this point and what role it needed to play moving forward. We then provided feedback to the whole staff, discussing the timeline of events.

We planned for Lovelyn to 'meet' with student leadership: Shannon Pitman, Semane Reddy--Mbewu, Michaela Todd and Anna von Willingh, from 15h15 and 16h45. This meeting took place without our presence to enable the transparency and 'safe space' that we wanted to create.

**Tuesday 16 June** (Youth Day Public Holiday): ARTT (Anti-racism Task Team) meeting 10 – 12h00 where we shared strategy ideas and a broad-based discussion was held.

**Wednesday 17 June:** Grade 10s returned to school for a protocol debriefing (Covid-19) plus update on the Social Media Anti-Racism Campaign. Lin Heidmann and Heather Goedeke met with Lovelyn Nwadeyi to conceptualise a Parent webinar with the title, "Are you wondering how to talk to your daughters about race?" at the start of Term 3. A PEG Meeting was held at 17h00.

**Thursday 18 June:** Lin Heidmann and Lovelyn Nwadeyi had a one-on-one 'meet' to discuss the Prep School feedback and Heather Goedeke met with Lovelyn Nwadeyi to go through the Senior School feedback 15h00 – 16h30. We made the decision to hold off on a whole staff webinar until Term 3 when Lovelyn Nwadeyi would possibly be able to come to Capetown as we felt it would be really beneficial to have in-person facilitation, especially with regard to the presentation of critical racial literacy modules for all staff.

**Friday 19 June:** Lin Heidmann and Heather Goedeke hosted a whole staff webinar at 12h30 – 14h00 to update staff on TEB and to provide some closure for Term Two. We realized that planning the way forward would take time and planned to meet with Lovelyn Nwadeyi during the holidays to revisit the original plan she had proposed for Herschel.

## ANNEXURE 2

### STAFF RECRUITMENT STATISTICS

Staff Recruitment – whole school (w = white; soc = staff of colour)

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
2 soc	1 soc	8 soc	2 soc	9 soc (3 soc appointed during 2020)	5 soc
5 w	8 w	4 w	6 w	6 w	3 w

## ANNEXURE 3

### TRANSFORMATION GOALS 2021

TRANSFORMATION	EQUITY	BELONGING
Student, teachers and Council demographics	Anti-racism and all forms of discrimination	Religious diversity
Racial literacy and Curriculum review	Fairness in sport	Diversity in Cultural activities
Monitoring systems	Procurement	Symbolism of the school to reflect a modern South Africa
Diversification of the OHA	Social Responsibility	Conscious conversations and connection with all parents
	Review of the current bursary and scholarship process	