



No. 15 – 27 September 2023

HERSCHEL SENIOR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents and Pupils

“We need to educate our children for unpredictability... If you're not prepared to be wrong, you'll never come up with anything original. We stigmatize mistakes in school, mistakes are the worst thing you can make. We are educating our kids out of their creative capacities.” (Sir Ken Robinson)

ISASA / SAHISA Conference

I have recently returned from the annual ISASA (Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa) / SAHISA (South African Heads of Independent Schools of Southern Africa) combined conference and feel reassured that we are in good hands regarding the executive leadership of both organisations. Lebogang Montjane, Executive Director of ISASA continues to lead with vision and focus, his global trends report covering geopolitics, environmental issues, economic factors, social challenges, educational issues, sustainability and the practical challenges of teacher quality and supply. Lisa Palmer (Kingsmead College) has succeeded Jakes Fredericks as Chair of SAHISA and is a well-networked and very passionate Head and girls' schools' representative. The line-up of speakers at the combined conference ensured that we were updated on global trends in education and emerging technologies; inspired by brilliant minds in the fields of Science, Neuroplasticity, Engineering, Design and Psychology, as well as updated on trends specific to education in South Africa. These included teacher shortages, continued inequities in terms of the

quality, impact and resources in schools, the many important conversations supportive of change and transformation, as well as the realization for a need to focus on the health and wellness of pupils and teachers.

It is a privilege to be able to attend the conference each year and I value the opportunity to discuss issues with heads at other girls' schools, as well as to be enriched through challenging presentations and topics under discussion in an educational landscape that is changing rapidly.

Independent Examination Board (IEB)

Last week I also attended my first meeting as a newly appointed member of the IEB Academic Committee. This is a position I relish because it allows me to participate in decision-making at the 'coal-face' of independent education. The committee comprises a range of academics and heads, as well as curriculum specialists and so provides a rich space for growth and learning. Several important decisions were made regarding the choice of texts for 2025 / 2026, and the meeting included an introduction to the role of AI in our schools, and our need to harness this technology to equip pupils for the world of work which they will enter. There was also a focused discussion on the role of data analysis in subjects regarding the provision of quantitative evidence, for example, and beyond that, our need to use data to inform decision-making across all areas of school operation.

When we made the decision to move to the Independent Examination Board (IEB) in 2021, we communicated at length with the current Grade 11 parents whose daughters will be the first cohort of pupils to write the IEB NSC Examinations in 2024.

We met with the Grade 10 pupils on the 20 September to discuss with them the benefits of the IEB and what they need to focus on as they prepare to enter Grade 11. This after asking them to submit Google form responses to some questions regarding their subject choices and their experiences in these subjects. Jess Winn, an IEB matriculant (Kingsmead, Johannesburg) currently studying at Stellenbosch University, answered several questions the girls had, and what is clearly evident is the fact that they feel supported, they are enjoying the more open-ended learning styles and discussions, developing their critical thinking skills and realizing the importance of learning as a process. Our Grade 10s are feeling supported and understand that the move to the IEB does not signify a change in curriculum, but rather, a change in the ways that assessments happen.



At the recent House Representatives meeting, it was suggested that I re-send communication to those parents whose daughters are coming through in the younger grades, to provide them with an overview of the IEB and the advantages of this assessment programme.

“The IEB makes every effort to ensure that our assessments are globally competitive and that our students have access to assessments that compete at the highest level.” [IEB]

As an independent ISASA school still writing the WCED NSC, Herschel did not have autonomy with respect to the curriculum and given that this is the core business at Herschel, it did not make sense to be restricted in our independence, just as it did not make sense not to “compete at the highest level”. This is what precipitated the move to the IEB. In a nutshell, the assessment model provides a relevant and skills rich approach to learning and encourages independent critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, creativity and communication across several platforms and disciplines.

The IEB approach is designed to produce young adults who are:

- Critical users of information
- Ethical reasoners
- Problem solvers
- Creative and reflective thinkers
- Lifelong learners
- Society members respectful of diversity, particularly in the Southern African context
- Active citizens committed to upholding the principles of the SA constitution and the wellbeing of all people.

This pedagogy is reinforced through the choice of texts, diversity across examination panels, a significant investment in ongoing research, benchmarking to international standards across a number of examination boards, ongoing professional development of teachers within the IEB system and a commitment to South Africa and the African continent (evident in further expansion into Southern Africa).

Our move to the IEB supports academic freedom and more importantly a consistent offering across all subjects, taught at a level commensurate with university entrance requirements, requiring pupils to apply knowledge and respond to higher order questions, as opposed to testing recall.

Through an independent examination board, we have the capacity to really make a difference in the way in which we prepare pupils to think critically, independently and creatively to meet the challenges they will face in this disrupted world where they will need to find solutions, work collaboratively, think differently and engage intentionally and meaningfully in order to create a more equitable society and a better world.

Put simply, there is a difference between marks and learning. This is in line with global trends towards learning as a life-long process, using personalized learning pathways. These pathways require the aforementioned skills in order to ensure a relevant, progressive and meaningful curriculum, one that is highly responsive to change and to the rate of change.

I was delighted when reading through the comments submitted by Grade 10 pupils in response to their experience of teaching and learning to note such phrases as: "I don't just need to memorise facts but am learning to analyse and interpret" and "my teacher encourages mistakes and I feel safe asking questions". Comments such as these underpin learning because they reflect an active learning environment in which pupils are invested in their learning and see it as a process.

In Grades 8 and 9 your daughters are already immersed in the process.

The change to the IEB required the assessment of several areas, ranging from academic, human resources, practical implementation, legal to financial aspects. We are now well into the transition, with all subject departments having spent time with experienced IEB teachers having specific regard to applicable assessment standards and guidelines.

The powerful words of Ken Robinson, recently deceased, echo really loudly in the advocacy for a change in educational pedagogy and approach:

The dominant systems of education are based on three "assumptions" that are exactly opposite to how human lives are actually lived. First, they promote standardization and a narrow view of intelligence when human talents are diverse and personal. Second, they promote compliance when cultural progress and achievement depend on the cultivation of imagination and creativity. Third, they are linear and rigid when the course of each human life, including yours, is organic and largely unpredictable."

At Herschel, our objective is to provide pupils with the best education available, to equip them to be able to contribute to this country's numerous and critically needed solutions to enable growth. The IEB provides us with an assessment model and independent curriculum to support growth.

Heritage Day, 24 September

Our rich and varied cultural heritage has a profound power to help build our nation. (Nelson Mandela)

The theme for this year's Heritage Day was: Celebrating our cultural diversity in a democratic South Africa. It is important that we know and acknowledge who we are, where we come from; what complexities or intersectionality shapes and forms us; how we distinguish ourselves through belonging; what practices, beliefs, customs and traditions unite

us and make us different at the same time. We need to pass this knowledge and way of being on to our children and to teach them that there are many ways of being and that all of these contribute to our rich cultural heritage in South Africa. It is also important to acknowledge the incredible natural heritage that we have in this country and to remind our children of the beauty and diversity of this. Social media, retail outlets and popular culture have shaped this day into being a national 'braai day' and while this might not be the reason we celebrate Heritage Day it is HOW many South Africans celebrate it! However you celebrated, I hope that it was a beautiful day!

Holiday wishes and a well-deserved rest for all!

Enjoy the holiday break, albeit a very short one this year! (The good news is that in 2024, there is a two-week September holiday!) To all of the matrics, I hope that you have a proper break from studying and that you use this time to restore, catch up with your family and friends and 'press pause' before the busyness of rites-of-passage functions and farewells and preparation for your Final NSC Examinations. You studied hard for your preliminary examinations and so have already done a lot of the groundwork for finals.

To all of the Herschel community; staff, pupils and teachers, happy holidays!

Best wishes,

Heather



LEADERSHIP 2024 ANNOUNCEMENT

Congratulations to the following students who have been selected for the following leadership positions:
(In order of appearance)

Head of Rolt – Alexa de Villiers
Head of Merriman – Emma Gordon
Head of Jagger – Intando Taitai
Head of Carter – Zara-Leigh Oliphant
Head of Sport – Leah Faurholm
Head of Culture – Enqi Du
Head of Community Engagement – Georgina Withers
Head of Sustainability – Anna Ashbolt
Chair of SRC – Erin Meyer
Head of Media and Events – Mia Sainsbury

The yellow and orange pincushion proteas symbolize spontaneity, happiness, joy, cheerfulness, bright days, and friendships.

May you, in your roles, be spontaneous, bring happiness and many bright days to our campus and your portfolio, grow friendships and trust, and always work with compassion and joy.



LEADERSHIP 2024 ANNOUNCEMENT - HOUSE DEPUTIES

Congratulations to the following House Deputies who have been selected for the following Houses:

CARTER

Junior phase – Michaela Edwards

Senior phase – Georgia Finlayson

JAGGER

Junior phase – Anna Searson

Senior phase – Safara Ackermann

MERRIMAN

Junior phase – Tia Deliperi

Senior phase – Kate Formby

ROLT

Junior phase – Kate Hodgson

Senior phase – Zoë Arenhold

Proteas are a symbol of courage, change, and becoming something better – may all of you have the courage to drive change and fun in your House and make it better than ever for all.



INTERHOUSE DANCE

Congratulations to everyone who took part in the Interhouse Dance Competition, and well done to Zintle Lujabe (Top Senior Dancer), Rania Macnab (Top Junior Dancer) and Merriman House for being the overall winner of the competition.



Grade 9 Theatremakers

The Grade 9 Theatremakers have been tasked with scenic and stage design this term. Their assignment entailed the creation of a shoebox diorama representing a stage set for a play of their selection. Pupils had to engage with the needs, mechanics, moving of scenes, and aesthetics of the play. In addition, they had to work with the engineering of the stage whilst conceptually interpreting the themes and motifs of the play. Kudos to the Theatremakers for their exceptional work!



Sports Wrap

SWIMMING

At the recently held South African Swimming Championships, Sophia Trout qualified for the South African National Junior Championship (SANJ). This is the highest of the age group swimming levels and is a fantastic achievement.

Amy Combrick has been invited to participate in FINA World Cup event taking place in Budapest, Hungary at the end of October.



Congratulations Sophia and Amy, we are very proud of you both.

WATER POLO

Morgan Christian recently represented the country in the U20 Water Polo World Cup Tournament held in Portugal. In anticipation of the tournament, the team underwent an intensive five-day conditioning and training camp at Reddam Helderfontein High School in Gauteng.

In South Africa's pool, there were five teams: Portugal, New Zealand and France, as well as Kazakhstan and Chile, both of which the South African team defeated. Following the conclusion of the tournament, South Africa secured 17th position out of 20 participating countries.

Morgan had the following to say after the tour: "The standard of skills displayed by the other teams has motivated me even more to fulfil my ambition of playing water polo overseas. I enjoyed the vibe of my team; it is amazing how much team spirit is developed over a short period of time. I also took the opportunity to meet and chat with players from other countries. I have already linked up with some of them on social media and I will stay in contact with them in future.

I would encourage all my fellow Herschelians to be the best that they can be, as each one of us has our own unique talent. It can take you to a place that you may never have dreamt of going. I am so grateful for this opportunity and cannot wait to see where water polo takes me next."

A promotional graphic for the World Aquatics Women's U20 Water Polo Championships. The graphic features a dark background with orange and white text. At the top, it reads "WORLD AQUATICS WOMEN'S U20 WATER POLO Championships" and "COIMBRA (PORTUGAL) | 08 - 15 SEPTEMBER 2023". Below this, it says "WATER POLO TEAM" and "#TEAMSA". The central focus is a profile of Morgan Christian, with her name, height (170cm), position (Center Forward), and a motivational quote: "Never let success get to your head and never let failure get to your heart." To the right of the text is a small photo of Morgan Christian in a pool, wearing a blue and pink water polo cap and goggles. At the bottom, there are logos for the South African Olympic Committee, Sport, Arts & Culture, Southern Sun, arena, and the African Continental Cup of Nations. The website "www.swimsa.org" and social media handles are also listed.

WATER POLO WESTERN PROVINCE REPRESENTATION

Congratulations to the following Herschel water polo players for their selection to the various Western Province Water Polo Teams:

U14A Team – Sophie Lashbrooke, Anna Sherren and Sophia Turner.

U14B Team – Jenna Formby and Julia Swain.
Frances Leinberger non-traveling reserve.

U15A Team – Samatha Nimb, Jemma Pearse, Nina Wides and Charlotte Wiltshire.

U15B Team – Paige Clarence, Emily Dickinson, Gabrielle Meyer, Molly Parry, Sarah Surgeoner and Anna van Aarde. Samantha Miller non-traveling reserve.

U16A Team – Kirsten Böttger, Kelly Cadiz, Grace Sales, Gabriela Stuart-Reckling and Sophie Vickers.

U16B Team – Samantha Dore and Carla Lampe.

U19A Team – Morgan Christian, Alexa de Villers, Tayla Kreyborg, Tyra Penney, Amy van Breda and Emily van Heerden.

U19B Team – Isabella Tooley, Kate Formby and Nicole Bantom. Bianca Stewart non-traveling reserve.

SPORT TOURS

DGC Water Polo Tournament - KZN

The water polo season kicked off with the U16 DGC Water Polo Tournament which took place in Durban from Friday 8 September to Sunday 10 September.

The team played exciting water polo, winning all their pool matches and qualifying for the semi-finals, where they played against DGC.



According to Coach Craig Haird, the team played out of their socks but unfortunately they lost to DGC by one goal. After a nerve-wracking final match, the U16 team placed 3rd overall. Well done to the team, coach Craig Haird and team manager Ruby Versfeld.

Mackenzie Cup

The Herschel U16A and 1st Water Polo Teams participated in the Mackenzie Cup hosted by Reddam Constantia from Friday 15 September to Sunday 17 September.

Having played a number of games on the Friday, the teams were back in the water at 7am on Saturday morning, with both teams qualifying for the quarter-finals. The knockout stages were tough to watch, with the Herschel U16 team eventually ending up in 7th spot. The 1st team lost 5-4 in the semi-finals to Reddam. It was so heartbreakingly close. In the match for third place, the team had an emphatic victory over DSG. We are so proud of both the teams. This was the last Mackenzie Cup for our matrics. Thank you for all your years of dedication.



Collegiate Water Polo Tournament

The Herschel U15A Water Polo Team participated in the Collegiate Girls Tournament which took place in Gqerberha from Thursday 21 September to Saturday 23 September. The team started off the tournament with a great win against St Mary's (7-3). On Friday they played in the 2nd pool matches against Pearson High School, this time winning 7-1.

After winning all their pool games, they advanced to the quarter-finals. Following a bright and early start on Saturday, the team played in a nail-biter quarter-final match against Kingswood, securing a 7-4 win. After an exciting and hard fought semi-final against Reddam, the team narrowly lost and played against St Stithians for 3rd and 4th place, eventually placing 4th overall. Thank you to coach Nicole Rimmer and team manager Sam Wilensky for accompanying the team.



St Anne's U19 Waterpolo Tournament - KZN

During this past long weekend, the Herschel 1st Water Polo Team participated in the St Anne's Tournament, where the team experienced both triumphs and setbacks along the way. Finishing top of their pool meant that the team went straight through to the quarter-finals, where they dominated and beat St Anne's. They went on to play a tough semi-final against Roedean, narrowly losing 9-8.

Although the team didn't achieve the desired 1st place, and came 4th overall, this tour will always hold a special place in their hearts, especially for the matrics who played their final water polo match for Herschel. The friendships formed, the laughter shared, and the memories created as a team will forever be treasured. Tyra Penney (Captain) said the following after the tour: "Our bond is

irreplaceable, and the experiences we have had together will stay with us forever".

Congratulations to Tyra Penney and Morgan Christian for their selection to the All Stars Tournament Team.



St Anne's Tennis Tournament

Over the long weekend six of the Herschel tennis players took part in the St Anne's Tennis Tournament. Despite the rain following the team from Cape Town, and a full day of tennis lost, the team was able to keep up Herschel's reputation for tennis, coming 5th in both the doubles and mixed doubles tournament. The level of tennis was outstanding, as well as the perseverance of each player, playing through injuries, early mornings, slippery courts and very hard serves from the boys teams. A shoutout to St Anne's and Hilton College for hosting the team, and a special thank you to Ms Collie for being the players' mum away from home.



St Peter's Sport and Cultural Festival (Basketball)

The Herschel Basketball Team participated in the St Peter's Sport and Cultural Festival from Wednesday 20 September to Sunday 24 September. The tour has been described as an incredibly successful tour, both on and off the court.

The team not only excelled in their basketball performances but also forged lasting memories and friendships. They achieved a remarkable feat, winning all their pool games and advancing to the quarterfinals, where they convincingly defeated St Peter's. In the subsequent match against Waterford, they secured their spot in the final, ultimately emerging victorious with a score of 35-11 against Redhill. Remarkably, every game was won by a margin of more than 15 points, making the tour even more memorable. A special shoutout goes to Nina Kabalin, who earned the MVP title for her outstanding performance in the final match! Thank you to coach Pesh Ndleni and team manager Ms Nicole Mangondo for accompanying the team.



You are invited to our

2023 SPORT AWARDS EVENING

Wednesday 11 October
18:00 for 18:30



Herschel Theatre

Dress Code: Smart
RSVP by Monday 9 October (link below)

<https://forms.gle/EG7FTmZLZg8afxYQ9>

