



## Educating Young South Africans with Heart

# PCF Newsletter – August 2017

### Dear HeronBridge Parents,

The Parents Consultative Forum (PCF) met on the 10 July 2017 and the following topics were discussed following on from feedback we have received from the parents through the communication channels.

#### 1. Sale of school

Tim Irving fed back that the sales agreement of the school is in the final stretch and that legal agreements governing the sale of the school are nearing conclusion. There will be a detailed communication brief that will be put out in this regard by the school management.

#### 2. My school funds

My school fund continues to be put to good use with regards upgrading the school facilities that ultimately benefit all. Recent expenditure that has taken place has been the purchase of shade cloth for the Pre-Prep and Preparatory school.

A further request has been put forward to add additional shade to the Pre-Prep playground area and to provide additional seating areas in and around the Pre-prep and Prep school by way of outdoor benches and tables. This has been approved.

A debate took place with regards the channelling of funds received from the My School Fund. One suggestion put forward was that these funds be channelled into an outreach programme endorsed by the school. The reasoning behind this being that these funds are derived from expenditure by parents at Woolworths - and as such, should not be benefiting capital investment projects that benefitted shareholders of the school. Equally the line of reasoning is that these funds should be channelled back to the school to ultimately enhance the school facilities from which all scholars and parents derive a benefit while at the school. An interesting dilemma!

We would most certainly welcome your suggestions on this in order that we as a PCF body can ensure that these funds are put

to the correct use and ultimately express the wishes of the parents who make this happen.

#### 3. Theft

Two matters were discussed. The risk of syndicate or organised theft targeting schools as a whole was raised. This with the view of a recent theft incident where an individual posing as a parent of a school stole cell phones from a visiting school during a high school hockey match. For noting is that similar incidents have taken place at other schools in the area and is ultimately a sad indictment on the society we live in.

Stemming from this the key matter debated was:

- ▶ The need for all to be vigilant and to report suspicious persons on site to management or security of the school;
- ▶ The need to carefully place and watch over valuables at all times. Not taking for granted that someone else will do this for you;
- ▶ The suggestion and request to install safe zones for storage of valuables at key locations throughout the school;

The next matter is a more difficult to pallet. We have had a number of complaints raised by parents with regards petty theft amongst scholars at the school. This is a difficult subject to discuss, however, is a reality. As the parent's body of the PCF we requested that the school address and reinforce the school values with regards to theft. As parents this matter needs to be equally reinforced at home.

#### 4. Languages

A request was put forward by one of our parents to have conversational Zulu introduced at the Pre-prep. Glynis provided a detailed report back on the language programme currently being taught in the Pre-Prep. The content of the discussion is quite technical and difficult to do justice to in the newsletter feedback.

However, the key feedback is that as far as reasonably possible conversational Zulu is being taught in the school. However, she advised that the key focus of the Pre- Prep was to introduce the key foundational building blocks for English which are required by our children in the Pre-Prep as they make the transition into Prep school. The limited time available during school hours did not make it possible to extend this to an additional language.

Glynis has asked that any parents wanting any additional information on the matter of language offer in the Pre-Prep to make contact with her directly in order that she can do justice to the topic and suggestion raised.

## 5. Maintenance and Cleanliness of bathrooms:

Maintenance and cleanliness of school facilities was once again discussed. This continues to be a focus of the school.

## 6. Sport offering at the school

Sport continues to be one of the most topical items raised by parents as a whole. In this regard the following key themes were raised. A significant debate took place around this and the school management have taken on board the feedback and concern raised by parents.

### Sport offering

- ▶ Number of sports on offer. Some parents feel there are too many sports on offer and, as such, not enough time is being spent in mastering these;
- ▶ Length and time of seasons was raised as a concern. Many parents are sighting having to join clubs outside the school in order to give adequate exposure to the chosen sporting codes. This then often conflicts with school sport.

### Sporting facilities

- ▶ Concern expressed on the lack of progress of sporting facilities (Astro turf for hockey and an upgrade of the swimming pool);
- ▶ Also pointed out that when compared to our traditional competitive schools Heronbridge has been benchmarked against, that our facilities are falling behind. A key matter that the new investors will have to take into consideration.

### Quality of coaching

- ▶ Concern has been expressed around the general quality of coaching on offer;
- ▶ Many parents tabled that they are having to fund private coaching in order to ensure their children are competitive in their chosen sport.

### Team selection and merit awards

- ▶ This matter was more to do with the high school, however, it was felt that clearer criteria should be communicated with regards team selection standards;
- ▶ Criteria for award to be communicated. This especially where awards are not necessarily issued on skill or technical ability, however, recognise participation or overall contribution to the school or team. These are by very nature subjective and open to questioning. On that basis the need to communicate more openly was encouraged.

## 7. Tuck shop.

The efficiency of service at the tuck shop was raised as a concern.

It would appear that one of the key concerns has been around the service in general at the tuck shop and the time taken to get orders placed. This is impacting negatively on scholars' free time during breaks.

The menu offer and availability of menu was also tabled for discussion. Both these items have been taken up and management have committed to address this with the tuck shop management.

## 8. School uniform

School uniforms and the uniform shop was discussed under the following topic.

- ▶ Cost of uniforms;
- ▶ Quality of uniforms;

Tim confirmed that this remains a key focus of the school management team. The uniform shop is run by the school and is not outsourced on a profit basis. The key focus of the school remains on ensuring:

- ▶ Quality of uniforms are maintained;
- ▶ Uniforms are practical and use appropriate;
- ▶ Benchmarking of cost is done on a regular basis to ensure school uniforms remain affordable.

## 9. HeronBridge App

The Heronbridge App on our smart phone devices was up for discussion. One of the requests was to look into the ability to print information directly from the app. An interesting discussion took place as a result without any meaningful conclusion being reached. Except to say this is for IT to consider and feedback on.

For noting you are currently able to send information to an email address from the App in order to print off, however, this request was to be able to print directly from the App to a printing device. For any who may know how this can be done please help?

## 10. HeronBridge PCF email

After our email went out asking for parent input to our PCF meeting, it was brought to our attention that the email address link was not working.

This problem has hopefully now been rectified by The IT department. If you did not receive an acknowledgement of your email, please assume it has not been received and resend to [pcf@heronbridge.co.za](mailto:pcf@heronbridge.co.za)

In closing we would like to thank all parents for their valued feedback. The PCF is committed to addressing the concerns raised and ensuring we work with the school to get the appropriate feedback and/or resolution on the concerns and suggestions tabled.

We would like to wish you all a very pleasant August break. If you are travelling travel safely. If you are staying in the "Big Smoke" remain calm and enjoy the reduction of traffic in and around Fourways on account of the private school holidays.

*Kind Regards*

*PCF parent representatives.*