

FROM THE PORCH

The start-of-term newsletter from the Director of Boarding at Maritzburg College



Sunday, 1 April 2018

Good afternoon, everyone

By the time you read this, the Easter holidays will be about over – if not over completely. I hope you and your young men, and your families, all had a blessed Easter. I had some fun times with my two fellas – the pic on the right was after a visit last week to the Howick Falls, which were quite a sight.



I have been told in the past that I am rather too verbose for some parents with these updates, so I will be more to-the-point with my feedback and comments about the year so far!

Start of 2018

The start of each year is arguably my most stressful period, with the arrival of 280 fledgling College boys for Borver Week and “Vietnam”. So much can go wrong, and it is so important too for College that the incoming Form 2 boys have a positive and stirring introduction to the school. Luckily, this year was reasonably uneventful, and after a 04h00 start, and lots of mud (*photo right middle*) etc. the boys were able to round off this year’s Vietnam in style, with a fiery war-cry at 06h00 (*photo right bottom*)!



There are currently 480 boarders at College, which is 40 more than October last year.



Boarders’ Representative Council of Learners (RCL)

One of my personal highlights last term was my ability to interact with these fine fellows (*in photo*). I met with the duly elected boarders’ RCL on three occasions last terms, and our 90-minute meetings have focused on privileges, duties and traditions. These meetings have been very successful, and I simply must pay tribute to the chairman, R Stainbank, whose contribution has been hugely appreciated. The dialogue has been open, friendly yet frank, and I look forward to continuing these discussions, debates and (friendly) arguments into the second term and beyond.



BE discipline

After a reasonably calm start to the year into March, there were a couple of behaviour-related incidents in March involving Form 6 boys, which was disappointing. Parents, please continue to keep a steady eye on your boys over the weekends – where are they hanging out, who are they hanging out with etc.? – to ensure that we all (College and you, the parents) are able to project a supportive and fair front that complements our collective efforts to have your boys come out happy, well-adjusted, responsible, and decent citizens ‘on the other side’.

Drug tests

We have not had real grounds for concern thus far this year, but the lurking scourge of recreational drug-use by teenagers around the world remains a background menace. Given that we can only test boys where we have a “reasonable suspicion”, we have mercifully carried out very few drug tests on boarders thus far this year. However, please be aware that we will carry out a number of tests at the start of the new term. ‘Tis “Splashy season” after all!

Boarder Parents’ Committee (BPC)

The BPC acts as a valuable mouthpiece for the boarder parent community. A termly meeting of the BPC took place on 16 February and the discussions were wide-ranging, open and valuable. I would like to thank Mr Guy McGladdery for his continued (benevolent) involvement in the affairs of the BE, as well as for his leadership and support. I would also like to welcome Mr Lionel Zuncel to the committee. Many of you will know Lionel, who recently was elected to the Governing Body – his portfolio is ‘boarding’.

BE staffing

We have this year been joined by Messrs Chris Nevay, Anthony Sparrow, Jason Greeff, KG Shezi, Sheldon Bosch, Doug Watson, Ngcebo Thembela and Ryan Tooms. We currently have 42 resident staff, which is of massive value to College generally as a school and is the envy of many other institutions.

Sadly, we bade farewell to Messrs Gerhard Erasmus and Richard Moolman at the end of the first term, and we thank them both for their contributions to the BE and wish them well with their endeavours.

During the recent holidays, I was honoured to attend the dedication of young Jean-Luc Hoffman, the son of Leanne and Drikus Hoffman. I wish you a long and happy life, my boy!



Project Madevu

The pouring of the concrete for the third floor of Shepstone’s was completed in mid-March. The construction is on schedule.

BE mentoring:

If you feel that your son needs someone to keep a particular eye on him in the BE, or you feel that there is a lack of contact from us, please contact either his BE housemaster or (preferably) his BE mentor. Your sons’ respective BE mentors should have emailed you all at the start of the year!

Looking forward

- The planning for the extension of Elliott House – to increase its bed capacity from 68 to at least 82 – has commenced. The extensions need to have been completed by January 2020.
- The continued increase in the size of the BE is placing pressure on especially the kitchen and the sanatorium, both of which are being monitored.
- The BE staff are also keeping an ongoing eye on the sizes of the boarding houses themselves, and are considering a few options on how best to manage and monitor the boys in the future, given the fact that international norms point to houses that are about 60 beds in extent.

Important dates for the second term of 2018:

- 9 April, from 14h00: *Boarders return*
From 19h00: *Roll call*
- 11 April at 05h30: *BE run for Forms 2 to 5*
- 14 April: *Interschool exchange vs PBHS (compulsory attendance)*
From 12h15: *New boarder sleepover*
- 17 April: *Form 2 Parents' Evening (APMH)*
- 21 April: *Interschool exchange vs Hilton (compulsory attendance)*
- 24 April: *Form 3 Parents' Evening (APMH)*
- 26 April: *Limited rugby and hockey at Northwood (start of the first free weekend)*
- 1 & 2 May: *Boarders return*
- 25 May: *BPC meeting and start of the second free weekend*
- 22 June, at 12h30: *End of the second term*

Please access the term calendar on the D6 Communicator for further details.

Closure

Have a superb second term and thank you for your support, encouragement and general input thus far this year.

Matthew