Orientation Day NEW

**Dear Stakeholders**

Each year at around this time we start our planning for the Orientation Day for the following year. Breaking with tradition this year, we have decided to address in the pre-planning all three groups of stakeholders – teachers, parents and learners – since critical input is required from each. Just try removing one leg from the stool ...

The actual date for *Orientation Day NEW* is yet to be determined. Enough to say, it will most likely take place on a Saturday morning, early in the second school term. A further communication will be sent in the new year to finalise certain details.

The customary elements and procedures will be adopted: welcome packs for attendees, foyer display, guided tours of the facilities, address by the head, tea-time and refreshments, opportunities for interaction with subject teachers and current learners, and of course the ever-popular drama displays and music performances by members of our talented school body.

Please read through everything carefully: it will be appreciated if you could bring to the attention of the organising Committee any further suggestions that you might have, or any adjustments that you might wish to propose. The wider we cast our net, the more plentiful will be the catch of ideas.

Introduction

For the prospective new learner, as for their parent(s) / guardian(s), an Orientation Day – or ‘Open Day’ as some prefer to call it – at an intended high school is all about first impressions. The very fact that the learner/parent has decided to pay us a call, means that they have placed us on a shortlist of secondary institutions: they have expressed interest in what we have to offer, and wish to establish whether what they SEE and ENCOUNTER matches up with the write-ups and recommendations.

It is up to us to provide these confirmations – to ensure that first impressions are positive and lasting ones. We need to have been making headlines for all the right reasons. If first impressions can furthermore be transformed into deep impressions, we will have achieved our aim.

**New learners at a new high school are bombarded with choices.** The first (tentative) choice was to select that particular high in the first place. But it doesn’t end there. Future careers are at stake. What am I good at? What do I do well? What do I most ENJOY doing? While final subject choice for matriculation is not settled in Grade 8, there are some broad choices which nevertheless should be made at this early stage. Children are gifted in various ways, and it is important to begin nurturing inborn talents at an early age – indeed, even during the preparatory school phase. The broad learning area of Arts & Culture (see further below) is the first junction for this level of streamlining. Every child must know how to read and write, and have some knowledge of history, geography and the scientific enterprise, BUT good artists are necessarily good musicians.

## Involvement

As already mentioned, it is our intent to involve all teachers, parents and learners in Orientation Day NEW, as far as possible. Naturally, some will be able to contribute more than others; but it is vital that nobody in any of these groups should feel *excluded* from the process. As in sports matches, even the spectators have paid their fee and have a role to play – cheering their teams on to victory.

In response to an earlier appeal we have received a number of offers to provide support. In certain instances the choice of support person has been unavoidable – for example, all subject teachers will need to be present, to respond to specific questions and issues related to their area of expertise – but in other instances we gratefully acknowledge the support of all who have volunteered to help with things like catering, parking control, ICT support – not to mention general setting up for the day, and cleaning up at the end.

Contact details of support personnel are available: call the secretary Mrs Brummer at 084 326 7755

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Some have indicated their willingness to help in some way, but have not yet officially been allocated a ‘duty’. Please consult the list of support personnel in the Appendix for details: each is most deserving of our encouragement.



**Many hands make light work**

## Feeder Schools

Applications have been received from four primary schools in the area – our traditional ‘feeder schools’ – current Grade 7s who have indicated their intention to attend Boulder High. The number of applications received to date is as follows:

**School Applications**

Vista 16

Denville 12

Trinder Park 21

Misty Hills 11

It is useful for our teaching staff to profile the new intake of each year according to various criteria, as this informs the ongoing planning and preparation for each successive year. Academic profiling is the main barometer by which we determine acceptances, but this remains a sensitive issue and is dealt with elsewhere. In any case, the Department always holds the final decision for placements –often based on no more than the geographical location of the family concerned – so that hard and fast rules for “who’s in” and who’s out” cannot always be applied.

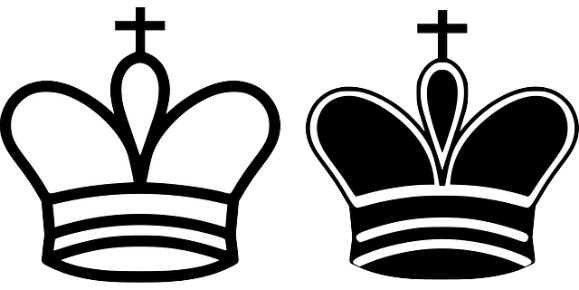
## Sport and Extramural

Boulder High places a high premium on the importance of these aspects within the education framework, and encourages these no less than academic excellence. The old proverb, apparently first recorded in 1659, rings true: *“All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.”*

The table below shows statistics of sporting preferences, per school.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Vista** | **Trinder Park** | **Denville** | **Misty Hills** | **TOTALS** |
| **SPORT** | **Netball** | 3 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 8 |
| **Athletics** | 1 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 9 |
| **Swimming** | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 7 |
| **Tennis** | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 |  |
|  | **Cricket** | 3 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| **Hockey** | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| **Rugby** | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 13 |

The interest expressed in various extramural activities is likewise taken into account. However, unlike the sporting codes indicated above, we have found that extramural activities tend to cater more to learners’ general interests and hobbies, and as such they are often integrated with other social outlets. It will be wonderful if the ‘captains’ of this expanding list of activities will step forward to promote their particular interest. If necessary, provision will be made in one or more of the classrooms to accommodate the promotion. Here are some of the extramural clubs / societies / activities that are currently active:

* Chess
* Film & Media
* Debating
* Outreach
* STEM
* Reading

# School Setup

Orientation Day is a day for showcasing Boulder High in the best possible light. This includes showing off the physical appearance of the school – inside and out.

## Foyer

The foyer is literally the starting point. We should make every effort to clean up and decorate this portal, and indeed turn it into an eminently favourable place for those all-important first impressions.

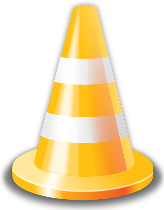
We are envisioning a suitably equipped helpdesk at one end, which will serve as a focal point for general enquiries and intercom announcements. Manual and online facilities will be provided for parents or guardians of prospective learners who might wish to complete application forms and make the necessary deposits. Extra seating will be available in a makeshift waiting area for the benefit of those waiting to be served.

At the other end of the foyer, tables will be set out for each of the elective subjects (Art, Drama, Music; Afrikaans, isiXhosa / German), where the teachers concerned will be in attendance to answer subject-specific queries. On display at each of these tables will be copies of the prescribed textbooks (with information on booksellers where these may be acquired), lists of special requirements (where applicable), and representative samples of work produced (e.g. poems, art drawings and watercolours).

## Hall

This is where the head will deliver his official address to all attendees. The entrance and stage area will be suitably decorated with flowers, and larger displays of learners’ artwork will be stationed along the perimeter. We already have a fair estimate of the number of people who will be present, and the cleaning staff have been tasked to bring in and arrange the requisite number of chairs. At the end of the day, the area must be clean, appealing and entirely adequate for the occasion – “ship-shape and Bristol fashion”, as the saying goes.

## Parking Area

The parking area in front of the school hall will be appropriately demarcated for buses, visitors’ vehicles and staff/parent cars. Some parents have already indicated their willingness to help with directions on the day: they will be issued with the traditional orange bibs, and are to have full jurisdiction over their “territory”. Traffic cones and marking ropes will be used to demarcation the various areas, and these are to be respected at all times. The Security Officer will be in radio contact with the event coordinator at all times, for general information on the movement of vehicles and to settle any differences.

## Classrooms, Laboratories, etc.

It has been decided to open up sufficient areas of the school, to enable prospective learners and their parents/guardians to see at first hand what the school is all about. This includes all the laboratories and places of special interest – natural sciences, CAT & IT, art room, drama room, music rooms, etc. – and also some of the more traditional classrooms (for subjects like Mathematics, English, History, etc.). We are proud of our new whiteboard facilities and would like even to demonstrate their capabilities in a simulated learning/teaching environment: what better way to demonstrate a school, but *in action* and *delivering*!

The security, safety and general integrity of all equipment, utensils etc. is naturally a matter of prime importance, and a minimum of one teacher will need to be present in each area or classroom so ensure that correct protocols are observed at all times. Specifically, the Chemistry and Natural Sciences labs will be opened for inspection only, and the Grade 7s will not be invited to test out any of the IT facilities, or to tinker with any of the instruments in the Music Block.

Brightly coloured vessels in the Science labs do NOT contain H2O

We shall be requiring the services of quite a few learner volunteers in order to realise this ambition; but this promises to be a really-fun-filled way of spending a couple of hours on a Saturday morning – in a real sense acting out the aspirations of the next intake of learners, who have chosen to come to OUR school, with a view to emulating OUR way of doing things.

# Events & Activities

Several key events will take place on Orientation Day, and there will be more than one activity that will be playing out simultaneously with some other activity. Each of these events and activities must be planned for meticulously and well in advance, to obviate any mishaps or miscalculations.

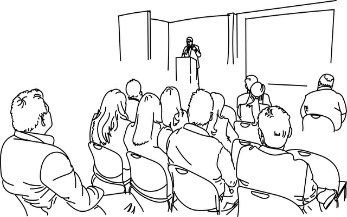
## Welcome Packs

Each prospective new learner will receive, upon entry, a Welcome Pack consisting of a few surprise items. Hats off to the Consumer Studies teacher who proposed this wonderful idea.

* Pencil case, embroidered with the school logo
* Lucky number
* (for a Lucky Draw)
* Small fruit juice
* Small packet of chips

## Principal’s Address

Learners and their parents/guardians will be officially welcome by the head in the school hall at 9:00. More than just a welcome, this address will include an outline on the day’s events and a brief overview of the school’s position – its history, its relevance within the local community, and its embracing vision for the future.

The head will be assisted by a PowerPoint presentation, in which statistics related to the growth of the school over the past number of years will be highlighted, and in which attention will be drawn to the plight of fee-paying schools generally – the need to balance the budget sheet in the midst of a variety of conflicting constraints: the inevitable tight-rope-walk between the expectations of a high quality education and the realities of an ever-increasing cost of living. Everyone will be reminded of the fact that there no such thing as a free lunch.

## Guided Tours

The tours are “the thing”. This is what a lot of people have come for – to amble through the school and to ask questions about what they see. Visual impressions are powerful ones, and when these are corroborated with interesting and meaningful explanations, curiosities are satisfied and impressions are confirmed.

It is important that our tour guides should be knowledgeable about the school and its workings, confident in addressing small-to-medium sized groups of people, and very neatly turned out: no loose buttons or frayed hems, hair the correct length, and positively NO make-up, jewellery or other distracting effects. The prefects will assist the teachers in checking on these and other small details.

### General

The general tours will take in all the common areas within the school – the general classrooms, assembly areas, playing fields and sports facilities, and amenities such as the tuck shop and the shaded walks. Group sizes of around 10 people are envisaged. Larger sizes are difficult to manage, and smaller groups of people somehow feel intimidated.

### Special Tours

Under this heading come all the ‘speciality’ tours, where our dedicated staff will introduce learners to the various laboratories and other exclusive areas. The special provisos and conditions under which learners will be permitted to explore these areas, as already indicated under *School Setup*, will apply.

**Special Tours**

Group sizes will be limited to 10 persons.

Available at each location will be information sheets which learners and parents will be encouraged to take: these will contain subject-specific details that prospective learners will appreciate having, in terms of what might be expected of them.

## Gymnastic / Drama Displays

There will be some slack times in the course of the morning. People will be free to wander through permitted areas, pretty much at their own pace, taking in the general atmosphere and chatting with others. While this is perfectly acceptable, it has been suggested that we provide a few additional events in order to showcase other facets of school life.

Gymnastics is a new addition to our basket of extramural (coaching) activities, and it will be wonderful if we can present – unanounced and as a surprise – a troupe of gymnasts “doing their thing” between the trees and the fountain centre-piece. Likewise with an envisioned dumb-show to be presented by members of the Drama Department. No words neccessary: a few suitably made-up characters from fiction moving between the milling groups of people. If done well and effectively – something that will long remembered by performer and observer alike.

## Other

No Orientation Day (at Boulder High, anyway) can be complete without two other important elements: something to eat, and something to listen to in the background.

**CATERING**

As in previous years, catering facilities will be provided. Our baking team has come up with a new selection of goodies that is sure to tempt the most jaded palate. Different types of beverages will likewise be on sale, ranging from home-made ginger beer to freshly squeezed juices to ordinary lemonade. Understandably, NO alcoholic beverages may be bought, sold or consumed on the premises. The tuck shop will also be open for the duration of the event, with their standard selection of commercial offerings.

**MUSIC**

The Music Department has kindly assented to adding a live musical accompaniment to proceedings. An ideal location for this would be the grassed area under the large trees in the quad. There is nothing quite like music to lend atmosphere to a situation. The programme will have to be carefully chosen: adjectives that spring to mind are ‘unobtrusive’ and yet ‘alluring’. This is not to deny, of course, that we might wish to include a ‘mini-concert’ as part of the offering: surely a powerful incentive to those considering Music as an elective for the Arts & Culture program.

# Closing

We confidently look forward to hosting **Orientation Day NEW**. This will not only afford another golden opportunity to showcase Boulder High to the broader community, but also to admit to our ranks a new generation of learners, to whom we proudly pass on the multi-faceted **torch of learning**. Education is the means whereby knowledge and discovery are passed on: let us not neglect to heighten and reward this most rewarding experience.

Best wishes!

Mr G.D. Patel

**Principal: Boulder High School**

**Appendix: Choir Members**

| **Surname, Init** | **Group** | **Class** | **Duty** |
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