



9 December 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

A warm welcome to all parents, old and new to Starck House. We are about to embark on a most exciting journey together as we co-parent your sons.

I place emphasis on the word 'together' as we are going to be in a partnership to ensure that through co-operation and clear channels of communication we (hostel staff and parents / guardians) their boarding experience in Starck House will be a positive one.

The purpose of this initial communication is to give you a broad overview of boarding at Starck House and to focus on a few key areas.

Origin of the name of the House:

Keith Starck was the longest serving Headmaster of Woodridge College and was Headmaster from 1966 – 1992. In establishing a boarding school in the College, he believed in creating a 'home away from home', promoting servant leadership and affording the pupils the ways and means to gain pride in their school and the environment. At the top of the page is the crest of the House. The motto is *Fortiorum Fortia Facta* and, when translated from the Latin, reads: The brave deeds of brave men.

Team Starck

It is a great privilege to serve as Housemaster of Starck House. I have been involved with boarding schools since 1992 and my wife, Eiona, was a Housemaster's daughter growing up too. I am supported by very able staff in the form of my Assistant Housemaster, Mr Tyrone Scholtz, who has himself been a Housemaster, and his wife, Sister Gillian Scholtz who is one of our Sanatorium sisters on campus. Mr Kyle Deasy has been associated with Starck House since its inception and finally Mr Kuhle Sonkosi, who joins us from the Preparatory School. Additionally, other members of staff, who live on the campus, will be performing some of the weekend duties. It would be remiss of me not to mention that the Dormitory Seniors play a big role in the running of the house and are often your son's first port of call when they are feeling low. This year the Matric leaders are led by our pupil Head of House, Jack Milne, and the Deputy Head of House, Phemo Moremong.

Regarding our different roles. I will be responsible for the following areas:

Communication to and liaison with parents, pupils and staff, academics, discipline, finance, maintenance, security, student movement including leave-outs, duties, Grade 8 and 12 reports and probably the most important, pastoral care.

Mr Tyrone Scholtz will be responsible for: Dress and appearance, pocket money, laundry, Grade 11 reports and hostel duties.

Mr Kyle Deasy will be doing hostel duties and grade 10 reports.

Prep

It goes without saying that providing a suitable environment for your sons to perform at their best academically is an important consideration and we try to ensure that each pupil is afforded the space, time and quiet time he needs to perform at his best. Please could I ask you to discuss the importance of prep times with your son and re-iterate that 2 hours a day will often not be sufficient time to prepare adequately and that there will be times where they will need to go to clinics and work in the afternoons outside of prep times.

Prep is generally from 18H45 until 20H30.

The boys do 2 sessions of prep in the dormitories until 20H30. They may not use a cell phone during this time so please, where possible, avoid communicating with them during these times. To ensure a suitable environment, they may not walk about, make coffee or consult one another during Prep unless they have permission to do group work (which should happen in an alternative venue such as common rooms). Pupils who use computers (Laptops, Tablets, Smart phones) in their studies must be using these for work purposes, and need to have their diaries signed by the teacher that assigned the work.

Please note that, as happens in the rest of South Africa, the electrical power supply to Woodridge is erratic (although it has improved significantly of late), but that a solar powered desk lamp/head torch is very useful if there is a power failure. In the event of longer power failures the pupils will be moved to the Academic block to do prep in the classrooms that have power from the generator.

During the evening and following their Prep sessions the boys are encouraged to use the common room to watch TV or play table tennis. The kitchen also has a kettle, microwave, snackwich and popcorn makers as well as a fridge. Pupils are encouraged to bring their own crockery and cutlery and to keep their cleaned utensils in their locker with their tuck.

Weekend arrangements

One of the many advantages of boarding at Woodridge is that the boys can go home regularly. In order for our Catering Department to plan effectively, we need to know by Wednesday if your son will be out for the weekend. These exeat arrangements are managed on the Parent/Pupil Portal of Engage, please refer to the letter, which outlines how to notify us of an exeat. It is especially important that I know when they are leaving and returning, what the transport arrangements are and with whom they will be staying. Boys must notify me by Wednesday if they will be going out for the weekend. I am sure you understand the need for following these guidelines rigorously. I would also prefer it if all boys took the time to greet the Master-on-duty before they leave and when they return. They must all sign in and out in the roll call book as this is a vital record for fire drills and other safety procedures.

Please note that your son is required to be dressed in school uniform when he leaves the school premises. If he returns on a Monday morning, he will need to be in Number 1's (formal attire with blazer). There are church services every Sunday at 17h00. Attendance is compulsory. The House will be locked between 16h30 and 18h30. Boarders should arrive before 16h30 or after 18h30 if they want access to the House. Please note that if he arrives after 07h00 on a Monday, he will only have access to the House after lunch as it is locked during school hours for security purposes.

Laundry

Laundry can be handed in twice a week on a Sunday and a Wednesday. The laundry is returned on a Monday and a Thursday. Boys are required to mark their laundry items clearly with a permanent marker or on a tag that is stitched on and to have 2 marked laundry and sock bags for their washing. They are required to submit a laundry slip with each load so that there is a record of what is sent away. Occasionally there are mix-ups and laundry is sent to the incorrect House. Mr Scholtz deals with these issues and it is always a lot easier if your son checks his laundry when it is returned to him. We are fortunate to have laundry equipment in the house which can be used if necessary. He can purchase detergent from the master on duty.

Medical

I know that one of the biggest sources of concern for parents is when your son gets sick. We are fortunate to have Sisters Baard and Scholtz to look after your boys. It is important that you advise both the Sisters and me about any medical issues that your son has. Please also take the time to read through the school's medical policy as it has some very pertinent information. Please note that we will issue medication every morning, if he has any daily medication, and that your son must not keep any medication in his area.

This letter is the first of the year and you can expect a few more. If there is any area that I have not covered or where you need more information, please consult the boarding handbook or feel free to email me or phone me. I am looking forward to the journey ahead.

Kind regards

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