



Collegiate Girls' High School

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14 March 2022

COLLEGIATE GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL APOLOGY

I, on behalf of the School, acknowledge the incident that happened on Monday 7 March. The Matrics were addressed on the suitable attire for the Matric Fashion Show which would be a mixed audience on the school premises. The Matrics were told that it was no longer compulsory to participate, and that learners could opt not to take part if their outfit would not be appropriate for the mixed age audience.

In the course of this week, we have had opportunities to engage with various stake-holders to understand how this talk and the subsequent events on the evening of the Fashion Show affected our learners. I, on behalf of the School, sincerely acknowledge that the discussions around the Fashion Show were triggers for some girls and hurtful to our learners. I, on behalf of the School, acknowledge that there were misunderstandings and miscommunication in how the events of the Matric Show Evening unfolded and that our learners felt unheard. I, on behalf of the School, am sorry that you are in such pain. Nevertheless, be assured that our conduct was not to cause harm and for that I, on behalf of the School, apologise unreservedly and sincerely for the unintended hurt it caused.

Mrs L Erasmus and the School Leadership



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PRINCIPAL'S COMMITMENT

The events of the past week have illuminated issues that in a way go to the core of Collegiate Girls' High School. It is undisputed that the history of Collegiate, and all that contributed to its present stature cannot be removed from the injustices of apartheid and colonialism that have been and continue to be felt and observed across South Africa. Collegiate has been able to lead educationally and holistically, and has an immense reputation for this. However, it is time for us to visibly lead in respect of transformation at the school. The extensive work done so far such as the full rewriting of the Code of Conduct, the creation of the "Comfortable in our Skin's Policy", the courageous women representing our five values, the Educator Internship Programme, diversity and anti-racism workshops with the staff, increasing diversity amongst the coaching staff, is insignificant when viewed against the work that remains to be done as highlighted this past week.

How one dresses is an expression of one's being and personhood. It follows that any restrictions on what one may wear is a limitation of this. How we dress is often representative of the culture that exhibits the most social power. In Collegiate, and in South African schools broadly, dress codes do exactly this. They represent the culture that retains a hegemony. This requires us to actively work to ensure that any cultural hegemony that exists does not come at the exclusion of any cultures or persons. Dress Codes are markedly gendered and do not fully embrace the diversity of our learners and staff.

It is critical that we ensure that the function behind dress codes is a legitimate one, and that we develop inclusive policies that do not unfairly limit the expression of students. It is for this reason that I am making it an official request, as the Principal of this school and a member of the committee itself, that the SGB Diversity, Inclusivity and Transformation Committee institutes a full review of all dress codes, and that it does so with specific concern for the cultural and social value of all learners and stakeholders in this school and community. I will also be taking it upon myself to ensure that the process of review is a transparent and extensive one; consisting of consultations with learners, parents, and staff. It is my hope that the report and recommendations that will arise from the Diversity, Inclusivity and transformation Committee's work will culminate in a necessary step towards an inclusive and culturally diverse Collegiate.

MRS LOUISE ERASMUS
PRINCIPAL

SGB Chair's address to the CGHS Assembly on 14 March 2022

Good morning,

I am Liesl Nienaber, the Chairperson of the School Governing Body.

It is important to note that we as the School Governing Body acknowledge the situation that has transpired at Collegiate over the past week, and particularly on Friday, 11 March.

As the SGB, our main priority is to act in the best interest of the school and specifically the learners. We do acknowledge that many people have been hurt by the course of events - learners, educators, parents, and the school community in general.

One of our core functions is to see that the policies of the school are appropriate, transforming and that they are implemented and adhered to.

In the context of this, there are several other matters that were raised on Friday 11 March, which will receive our attention **from all angles**.

The SGB, excluding the SGB learner representatives, will engage post this assembly, with the Department of Education, the Diversity, Inclusivity and Transformation Committee and the parent representatives here this morning to discuss an amicable and mediated way forward.

We will report back to all stakeholders in due course, respectfully requesting that the other commitments of all parties, and the pending school holiday be recognized – allowing for sufficient time for due diligence and engagement.

Thank you.