



16 August 2011

Dear Parents

GUILD UPDATE 16 AUGUST 2011

A new Guild was recently elected under the Chairmanship of Gerhard Smit. During its first planning session, the Guild had the opportunity to review its objectives and recent activities. The Guild is actively committed to revitalising its structure and reclaiming its role as the central link in relations between parents, teachers, management and the Board. The objectives of the Guild are:

- To provide an effective Forum for communication between the parents, school, staff and the Board
- To promote and foster the Somerset House family spirit between past and present parents, pupils and teachers and friends of the School.
- To assist the Board in raising funds for the benefit of the School.

In listing these objectives, the Guild needs the active support of both parents and teachers. To receive this support we will continuously seek your views on the vision and objectives of the school, as they pertain to Guild objectives and functions.

The Guild has decided to assign specific roles and responsibilities to each committee member. Aside from Gerhard Smit taking over as Chair, Kevin Gambarana will now act as Vice Chair, Richard Lord will deal with General Communications with assistance from Smuts Louw, Lisa Thompson will take responsibility for liaising with Class Representatives and the establishment of the Parents Forum, and Jacques Engelbrecht will again act as Treasurer. We've set ourselves a myriad of objectives and very tight timelines against which to achieve them. In order to initiate this process we're going to asking for the following:

- We would like to schedule a 60 minute session with all Class "Moms" (& Dads) on the 22nd of August to discuss the idea of the establishment of a Parent Forum. It is hoped that this Forum will serve to channel issues of collective interest or concern, to generate better understandings and joint problem solving on topics pertaining to teaching and learning, or any other topic noted worthy of collective input (for example, the School's approach to diversity; outreach programmes; religious tolerance; national curriculum changes) . Please provide feedback to The Guild (guild@somersethouse.co.za), or to your Class Representatives as soon as possible on any issues you would like to direct to The Guild to table.
- There is a full Guild meeting on 24 August and in preparation we'd like to receive as much correspondence as possible on items you'd like tabled. All submissions must please be received by 1800 on the 21st of August.
- We are planning a "Fun Day" for 5 November. Traditionally the Guild has been used to organise these events to raise funds which can then be used by the school as required. We note that there is some confusion as to what is covered by school fees and why additional funds need to be raised. To address this concern, we will provide all parents with a list of "Priority Needs" as determined by the School, list the costs and then ask you to identify which of these areas you feel is most deserving. The Fun Day will then contribute towards a specific objective chosen through the Guild. We would like your feedback on this approach for future events.

We shall at all times aim to provide feedback through the Blah and our link on the website, but as the communications link between parents, teachers and the Board, we encourage you to drop us an email about anything you feel should be dealt with by the Guild, on how you believe we can function more effectively. To revitalise the Guild in a way that is seen as effective and meaningful to all stakeholders, we plan to use the period between now and December to seek input and to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of our new structures.

We look forward to receiving your feedback, improving upon our channels of communication and working together with you to realise our joint expectations as stakeholders of Somerset House.

THE GUILD COMMITTEE