

STATEMENT ON SPIRITUALITY AND CHAPEL COMMITMENTS AT THE DIOCESAN SCHOOL FOR GIRLS GRAHAMSTOWN

Foundations and Mission statement

The DSG is an Anglican School, founded by Bishop Merriman. The Chapel, situated in the middle of the campus, was built in 1874. With its unique stained glass windows and beautiful furnishings the Chapel plays a significant role in the life of the school. It is the spiritual centre of the school, the place where the whole school gathers for worship and where we support one another in times of celebration and sadness. Our Chaplains are Anglican priests, licensed to the Bishop of Grahamstown, who is our Visitor. Our Mission Statement reminds us, *inter alia*, that we are committed to 'Christian witness in thought, word and deed', and it is our desire to live up to that pledge.

Response to different faiths and Christian traditions

The DSG welcomes girls from other faiths and denominations, respecting their beliefs and traditions. However, chapel attendance is obligatory for all girls and staff regardless of their personal convictions.

The Chapel

Regular services of worship are held on Sundays and during the week, it is also the place where we gather as a community to celebrate with and console one another. We try to provide a variety of services including the Eucharist, morning and evening prayer and music meditations. From time to time we invite guests to preach. A group of girls, the Sacristans, take responsibility for preparing the chapel for worship, for participating in the leading of services and for the wider pastoral care of the school. These girls are nominated by the Sacristans. The chapel is open throughout the day and early evening for those who wish to make use of the quiet space. Many of our alumnae choose to have their weddings in our chapel.

Spiritual Aims

It is our intention to invite girls to explore and deepen their own spirituality by offering exposure to and interpretation of the bible, teaching of the gospel, and allowing respectful dialogue. We would like all girls to know that they are loved by God and to respond to that love by acts of worship and interaction with the world around them, and to develop and live according to ethical standards informed by our beliefs. Access points for such exploration are the classroom, the chapel, confirmation classes, informal conversation, prayer and bible study groups, Community Engagement opportunities and in all we do at the DSG.

Role of the Chaplain

The Chaplain is responsible for the nurturing of the spiritual lives of the girls and staff, both pastorally, educationally and liturgically. It is the duty of the Chaplain to prepare girls for baptism, admission to communion and confirmation. The Chaplain, together with the San Sisters and other selected staff form the Wellness Team which is responsible for the care of the girls in the academic, medical and emotional areas of their lives.

Confirmation

Girls from grade 10 to 12 of the Protestant tradition may attend confirmation classes. Arrangements are made with the local Roman Catholic Church with regard to their confirmation classes.

Religious Education

Girls from grade 4 through 9 have RE lessons once per cycle with the Chaplain. The curriculum is designed to be age appropriate, to introduce and teach from the scriptures, to help girls with their prayer life and to encourage them to act out their beliefs through our Community Engagement projects as well as in their own non-structured interaction with others and the environment.