Diversity and Transformation Statement

As a member of the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA), Bridge House School is committed to playing its role in building a democratic, non-discriminatory South Africa and a diverse and equitable school and community.

Bridge House understands that for every one of its students, education is about becoming. Bridge House recognises that the South African nation is equally poised at the edge of becoming, seeing its commitment to its students’ journeys to a real and relevant world as inseparable from that same journey of the nation. Bridge House School, most of its students, and the South African nation as a whole, share a common trait: they are in their adolescent years, struggling to create new identities for themselves by capturing what was valuable about the past; finding ways to be free of wounds that linger in the present; and finding ways to identify a vision of the future that can draw them forward beyond any obstacles that may appear.

In its own values statement, Bridge House School affirms its commitment to creating a learning community which values integrity, love, wisdom, happiness and inner strength. The school’s vision includes grasping the opportunity to innovate and lead in our changing world, while the mission statement speaks of a creative and dynamic environment where each member of the Bridge House community is encouraged to develop sound values, self discipline, respect for others, responsible citizenship, a healthy self-image and a passion for life. Key to the success of Bridge House’s commitment is the quality of the environment it is able to create within the boundaries of the school, and the quality of the internal, personal environments it is able to foster in every one of its students, staff, governors and families of its students.

It is in these environments where bridges between self and other and past and future are constructed; where racial, cultural and religious diversity are celebrated and no longer feared; where the culture of human rights inscribed in South Africa’s Constitution is nurtured and upheld; where the responsibilities that derive from those rights and upon which those rights depend become part of who people are and how they act toward one another; where a new sense of belonging can be discovered; where new understandings about one’s own self are found; where new friendships are formed; and where learning itself is set free from all that hinders it. Setting and reaching new goals at times requires individuals and institutions to stretch beyond their comfort zones. A truly equitable and non-discriminatory democracy must be etched into people’s hearts, not simply penned on paper. Such a journey of social transformation requires determination and gentleness; strength and vulnerability; inclusion and space for reflection; speaking and listening; feeling at times when one does not want to feel; perseverance and patience; courage and care. The old and deeply internalised stories of inferiority and superiority that have
undermined learning for all South Africans must be replaced by a new story of who we are and who we can become. It is here where Bridge House seeks to be a leader in creating new norms and standards for education that are profoundly human; that intentionally counter the de-humanising norms and standards of the past; and that nurture the students of Bridge House, the school itself, and the nation of South Africa, to become all they are capable of becoming.

August 2010