

MERCHISTON  
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

*Established 1892*

GENERAL INFORMATION

**GUIDE**

**2010**



## **BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

### **CHAIRMAN**

MR S. VAN RENSBURG

### **MEMBERS**

MR A. MCFARLAND

MR M. MICHAUX

MR J. MOODIE

MR K. CAVELL-CLARKE

### **EX OFFICIO MEMBERS**

MR D BEETAR (Headmaster)

### **SECRETARY**

MRS G QUARMBY

### **STAFF REPS**

MR G LAMBOOY

MRS J. BOTHA

### **NON TEACHING STAFF REP**

MRS G QUARMBY

### **BOARDER REP**

MR D. GRANT

### **MAG REP**

MRS B. BULEY

## **SCHOOL MANAGEMENT**

### **HEADMASTER**

MR D BEETAR

### **DEPUTY HEADMASTER**

MR G LAMBOOY

### **HEADS OF DEPARTMENT**

MR L. ORCHARD	:	HOD - ENGLISH
MRS T. COLLOCOTT	:	GRADE 7 SECTION HEAD
MR R BISSCHOFF	:	GRADE 6 HOD
MR C HOWARD	:	GRADE 5 HOD
MISS P PAYNE	:	GRADE 4 HOD
MRS J THOMPSON	:	JUNIOR PREP PRINCIPLE.
MR D GRANT	:	EXTRA-MURALS
MRS R LIEBENBERG	:	HEAD OF ACADEMICS
MRS D. MORRISON	:	J.P. HOD / REM
MRS D. SIDEY	:	J.P. HOD
MRS C. HANSMEYER	:	GR R HOD
MR NENE	:	S.P. HOD

### A Short History

Founded in 1892 by Miss Agnes Rowe and Miss Elizabeth Allan - 18 boys. Original School in Pietermaritz Street.

1893 - 1st Prize Giving - 33 boys (9 boarders).

1894 - 1st Dux, Edward Collier - 51 boys.

1895 - Permission granted by Merchiston Castle School Headmaster, Dr Rogerson, to use their name and motto - Merchiston Preparatory School moved into its new premises in Prince Alfred Street

1910 - Mr S.R. Edminson - 1st Headmaster

1st Houses : Day Boys - Allan House

- Rowe House

Boarders - School House

1913 - School House splits into Rhodes and Milner

1923 - Mr R.A. Banks - 2nd Headmaster

1929 - Mr J.W. Parkinson - 3rd Headmaster

1950 - Mr W.R. Evans - 4th Headmaster (also Dux in 1913)

New Sports fields on present site

House colours used for first time

Allan - sky blue

Rowe - royal blue

Rhodes - red

Milner - green

1965 - Moved to new School in Bulwer Street - present site

Mr A.B. Kempe - 5th Headmaster

1976 - Mr R.M. Smith - 6th Headmaster

1983 - Boarding Establishment named Parkinson House

1986 - Acquired land adjacent to Dusi for extra sports fields -  
21st Birthday in "New School"

1988 - Mr B.L. Lendrum - 7th Headmaster

1992 - Centenary

1993 - Mr T.J. Jackson succeeded Mr B.L. Lendrum as  
8th Headmaster

1997 - Mr D Beetar assumes post of Acting Headmaster following resignation of Mr T Jackson.

1998 - Mr D Beetar succeeded Mr T.J. Jackson - 9<sup>th</sup> Headmaster

During the hundred or so years of its existence, Merchiston has grown in size and reputation to become what it is today, a Preparatory School which has contributed much to the educational legacy of the Province of Natal.

From the Victorian times of soberly dressed boys in knickerbockers and long stockings, Merchiston's early days could scarcely have suggested its rapid emergence into a School possessing a formidable list of scholastic achievements and traditions alike, impressive in the classroom and on the playing fields.

An empathy for the community at large and a reverence for what has been great in the past, has come to be rooted in the character of the School. Values such as honour, loyalty and service have supported and encouraged the legendary "Merchiston manners" seen at School and around Maritzburg over the past century.

In South Africa today, we live in an age of swift and momentous change. Merchiston is not afraid of this transition and in order to survive and achieve success in the future, the School has established a sound set of shared values upon which all policies and actions are based. The School is prepared to transform everything about itself, except those beliefs and values, as it moves successfully through life. For Merchiston, the future means a challenge charged with innovation and a constant search for excellence.

### **Academics**

A child-centred, holistic approach to teaching and learning is encouraged, where individual differences are recognised and catered for. Merchiston has a proud record of scholarships to prominent schools.

Certain OBE principles have been incorporated into the Merchiston academic focus. In many instances OBE is a continuation of the Merchiston curriculum. Allied to this is the focus on the personal development of the individual and his skills.

Homework is given on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. The time allocation for all pupils is about 30 minutes and includes reading activities (silent/aloud), spelling, extension/problem-solving activities and tables/bonds consolidation.

### **Extra-Mural Activities**

Merchiston is well known in Natal for its strong sporting ability. It is School policy to try to cater for every boy regardless of his competence. Emphasis is on enjoyment and although Merchiston plays to win, team spirit and sportsmanship are held in far greater esteem. Every boy is expected to participate in an activity each quarter. Boarders are expected to participate in two activities. Grade 3 boys may participate in one activity per quarter and two if permission is granted by the Director of Sport. Grade 1 and 2 boys participate in a variety of sporting activities from 13:00 to 14:00 two afternoons per week.

An alternative extra-mural component is also offered for those interested boys, including chess and orchestra.

### **Appearance and Manners**

Merchiston boys pride themselves on exceptionally neat appearance. Hair should at all times be cut to a reasonable length, not covering the ears, forehead or collar. The boys are famous for their impeccable manners. Proper greetings and the doffing of caps to all adults is a tradition well guarded.

### **Commitment**

Boys attending Merchiston know that commitment to the School and active participation is expected at all times. Loyalty, honour and pride are evidenced by over a century of educational prominence in South Africa.

## General

Please note that the Boarder Handbook deals with all matters pertaining to the Boarders and Boarding Establishment but many issues overlap.

### 1. Absenteeism

All absenteeism must be covered by a letter from parents or a doctor's certificate. This applies to extramural activities as well. Dental and medical appointments should be made outside School hours if at all possible. Taking boys out of School unnecessarily must be avoided. The School does not approve of pupils being taken out of school for extended holidays and respectfully encourages parents to pre-plan such activities to coincide with the school terms as set down by the KwaZulu Natal Education Department. Boys leaving school during the day, must be signed out at the front office.

### 2. Arrivals and Departures

To avoid congestion in the various parking areas, the following rules apply:

<b><u>DROP OFF AREA</u></b>			<b><u>PICK UP AREA</u></b>			
<i>Braid Street</i>	-	<i>Grade R</i>	*	<i>Braid Street</i>	-	<i>Grade R</i>
<i>Pecan Nut</i>	-	<i>Grades 1, 4 &amp; 5</i>	*	<i>Pecan Nut</i>	-	<i>Grade 1; all other Grades between 14h00 &amp; 14h30 &amp; after 16h00</i>
<i>Admin Car Park-</i>		<i>Grades 2 &amp; 3</i>	*	<i>Admin Car Park-</i>		<i>Grade 2; all other Grades between 14h00 and 14h30</i>
<i>B.E. Parking</i>	-	<i>Grades 6 &amp; 7</i>	*	<i>B.E. Parking</i>	-	<i>All Grades between 14h00 and 14h30</i>

**All boys must be picked up promptly at the end of the school day, either after lessons are finished or after the extra-mural programme. Parents are discouraged from leaving their children at their designated 'waiting areas' beyond 14h30 on their non-sport days.** *Further information regarding these arrangements will be provided by each grade at the beginning of the new school year.*

Grade R boys are collected at the Braid Street gate. Grade 1 boys are collected from the Pecan Nut area. The School gate will be opened at **12h15 and closed at 12h30** from Monday to Thursday for collection of Grade 1 pupils. On Friday the gate will be opened at **11h45**. Grade 2 parents may park in the Administration Car Park and collect their son from the Grade 2 classrooms. Pupils in grades one and two must be collected by no later than 12h30 from Monday to Thursday and by 12h00 on Friday, unless they are participating in sport. On sport days Grade 1 boys will be collected at 14h00 at the Pecan Nut area and Grade 2 boys will be collected from the Admin Car Park. Grade R finishes at 12h00 every day.

Boys must be collected at the latest by **12h00** on break up days and Free Weekends.

### 3. Arts, Crafts, Societies, Music and Cultural Activities

Merchiston endeavours to provide a well balanced, holistic approach to education. Music is offered as a co-curricular activity individually (piano) or as a group (orchestra). All boys take part in a Speech and Drama festival held biennially and some participate in the School drama production

### 4. Bags: Sportsbags and Satchels

For the sake of uniformity, only standard Merchiston bags may be used. These are obtained from the Mud Rat Shop and official school suppliers.

### 5. Board of Governors

The Board of Governors at Merchiston consists of 5 elected members. The Headmaster attends all meetings.

The main functions of the Board of Governors are:

- management of the School property;
- financial management;
- official mouthpiece of the parent body;
- appointment of staff;
- determination of policy regarding:
  - \* additional staff and remuneration;
  - \* bursary schemes;
  - \* School uniforms;
  - \* School times;
  - \* extramural activities;
  - \* code of conduct of pupils;
  - \* admissions;
  - \* age-limits for standards;
  - \* use of School property by outsiders.
- planning:
  - \* academic;
  - \* financial;
  - \* social; and
  - \* physical

The members of the Board of Governors are available to discuss any issues with parents regarding School matters.

## 6. Communication

### **Cell phone policy for pupils at Merchiston.**

Pupils may only bring cell phones to school under the following very strict conditions.

1. The parents have a very valid reason for their son to have to bring a cell phone to school.
2. The parent must apply in writing for permission from the Headmaster.
3. Permission will be granted in writing and the pupil must carry his letter of permission on him, at all times.
4. The school shall not accept any responsibility at all for the loss, theft or damage to any cell phone that is brought to school.
5. Cell phones may not be turned on under any circumstances during the school day i.e. between 07:30 and 14:00.
6. Any pupil caught disobeying the rules shall have the cell phone confiscated and the school will take appropriate action

Communication with your son's teacher is possible through his homework book. Appointments with the Headmaster and other members of staff may be made through the School secretaries. All official letters sent home must be signed for by parents at the back of the homework book.

**Parents may not proceed to the classrooms to speak to their sons or their teachers.** Messages and packages may be left at the office.

Please ensure that your son has clear instructions at the start of the day, as forwarding messages is time consuming and disruptive.

Ensure that your son has some money or a phone card to phone home if sport is cancelled. Boys may make use of the pay-phone outside the staffroom, three at a time, waiting their turn under the tuck-shop shelter, or the card phone at the compound.

Sport is cancelled at 12:00 due to inclement weather or any other reason. An SMS will be sent to parents in this regard.

In order to improve communication at Merchiston, the following aspects will be focused upon annually:

- \* a Parent Information Evening at the start of the year; when parents are apprised of matters regarding education and the class by the class teacher.
- \* a New Parents Cocktail Party at the start of the year;
- \* a Bi-quarterly Headmaster's Letter to parents;
- \* a Quarterly Grade Letter to parents;
- \* a Quarterly Parenting Forum
- \* Class and Boarder Representatives;
- \* a Suggestion Box
- \* a weekly sports letter

No doubt, a number of Merchiston fellowship functions for boys and parents, will enhance communication amongst the Merchiston Community.

## 7. Changes of Address and Telephone Number

Should your postal address and telephone number change at any time, please notify the School as this information is vital, especially in an emergency. The School cannot be held responsible for reports, fee statements etc. not reaching parents if a change of address has not been received in writing by the School Secretary.

## 8. Charities

Merchiston supports four charities during the course of the year (one per term). Donations are voluntary but boys are encouraged to make sacrifices for those less fortunate than themselves.

## 9. Choir

Merchiston is well-known for its excellent Choir. The Senior Primary Choir comprises of one hundred and ten boys from the Senior Primary Phase. The Junior Primary has its own choir.

The Choirs practice during School time and performances are given at various venues after School hours.

Merchiston boys have traditionally enjoyed their singing and becoming a member of the Choir is seen as a great honour.

## 10. Compulsory Attendances

There are three compulsory functions from which Merchiston boys may not be excused, unless they are ill. These are:

- the Interhouse Gala;
- the Interhouse Athletics Meeting; and
- Speech and Prize Giving for Senior Primary pupils (held in the City Hall at 18:30).

## 11. Counselling

The basis of Counselling is to create a helping relationship with the pupil, and through that to help him gain insight into his problems. The pupil works in conjunction with the counsellor to find and implement solutions. In doing this he establishes that he is capable of problem-solving, and this enhances his self-esteem.

Young people pass through many developmental stages and their success, or otherwise - greatly influences the extent to which they eventually emerge with a positive or negative self concept.

*"There is probably no thirteen year span in our lives that is more crucial in shaping attitudes about ourselves - particularly our feelings of adequacy and competency - than those which occur between five and eighteen. These are the years - the formative years - when growing children and developing adolescents incorporate and refine the attitude that says, 'I can', or the one that says 'I can't'" (Hammachek, 1979)*

An educational psychologist is on site once a week to assist with various counselling cases.

## 12. Excursions

It is School policy to embark on class excursions. The costs of excursions are additional to School fees. Teachers are required to warn parents timeously of all excursions and the costs involved.

Each class embarks on excursions during the year, some of which require the boys to sleep away from home for several nights. All excursions are compulsory and form a valuable part of the curriculum.

## 13. Food

Please ensure that your sons are well fed in the mornings with a substantial breakfast. Give them a good tea and lunch. Boys at Merchiston are active, and an empty stomach is synonymous with poor concentration.

Test all juice bottles for leaks. Avoid sticky foods. Mark all boxes and bottles with your son's name.

## 14. Aftercare at Merchiston

This is available for pupils who need to stay after school. There are several options available depending on how many afternoons per week your son needs to stay.

Merchiston has three aftercare facilities:

- Grade R and Grade 1
- Grade 2 and Grade 3
- Grade 4 to Grade 7

For further information please contact Mrs Tish Morley on 033 3425873 after 14h00 on week days.

## 15. Parkinson House Lunches

Day scholars may elect to have lunch at Parkinson House from Monday to Thursday. Lunch Forms indicating the number of days in each term and the cost per term are available from Mrs Quarmby (Secretary). Forms need to be returned with the payment one day before lunch is required, so that the Boarding Establishment can prepare sufficient meals.

## 16. Marking of Personal Items

All items of clothing and personal items must be clearly marked. Swimming towels and shoes need to be marked as well.

The School takes no responsibility for valuable items and money being lost or stolen. However, precautions are taken to safeguard the boys' property. Any valuable item or amount of money must be handed to the class teacher for safekeeping.

## 17. Media Centre

The Media Centre (Library) is run by one full-time and one part-time Media Centre teacher. Each boy attends Book Education classes for an hour every week. The emphasis is on resource based learning. Two administrative assistants give the teachers the necessary support.

Boys wishing to make use of the Media Centre may do so before School, at lunch time and every afternoon after school.

#### 18. Computer Centre

The Computer Centre is run on a full-time basis and is extensively used by all pupils.

#### 19. Mosque Prayers

Boys required to attend mosque prayers on Fridays may leave School at **12:30.**

Boys requiring to leave School for Mosque prayers must bring a letter to that effect written by their parents at the start of each year.

#### 20. Physical Education

Physical Education is a compulsory, integral component of every boy's weekly programme. Boys may not be exempt unless for medical reasons; they must be in possession of a letter to that effect. Regulation clothing must be worn which includes white or navy boxer shorts and a School athletics vest as well as a MPS swimming costume during the summer months.

#### 21. Punishment, Discipline and School Rules

Discipline at Merchiston is firm but fair. There is an emphasis on gentlemanly behaviour and respect. All boys are expected to have impeccable manners and show excellent sportsmanship.

It is School policy to use a positive approach to discipline by praising rather than belittling boys. Boys are taught that behaviour is a collective duty and they should gradually assume responsibility for their own behaviour within the context of the rules. An awareness of the need for self control, courtesy, contribution to the School, consideration and consistency is promoted.

Repeated misdemeanours and serious offences are punishable by offenders being sent to detention on a Saturday from 09:00 to 11:00. Parents are informed of the day and time by a letter, which must be signed and returned to School. Official detention is compulsory.

Further information is to be found in the Learners' Code of Conduct.

#### 22. Reports

Merchiston has a comprehensive and user friendly report system. This will be explained by staff at the information evenings in the New Year.

#### 23. School Facilities and Their Use

The School facilities are for the use of the boys during School hours and under supervision. Unauthorised use of the School facilities or grounds is prohibited. School facilities are strictly out of bounds during the holidays. Parents are requested to respect the privacy of resident staff during this time. Maintenance of sports facilities is also extensively carried out during this time, making it impossible to complete tasks if staff are interrupted.

#### 24. School Fees

Non-payment of School fees is viewed in a serious light and outstanding accounts are handed over to the School's attorneys for collection.

Should you wish to remove your son from either the School or Boarding Establishment, the following notice periods apply:

- Removal from School: one terms notice in writing or 25% of the annual School fees in lieu thereof;
- Removal from the Boarding Establishment: one term's notice in writing or one term's boarding fees in lieu thereof.

Merchiston is an educational institution that relies largely on the income derived from school fees. No monetary assistance is received from the State.

#### 25. Security

For security reasons, please follow the School policy for boys waiting for lifts in the afternoons as per number 2 in this guide.

The School gates are locked during the school day and are opened in time for parents to collect their children at times indicated in number 2. Parents requiring to remove their children early from school must report to the office, where the secretaries will call the child from the classroom.

The above procedure is carried out in the interests of the boys' safety.

#### 26. Sickbay

Any boy who is injured or is feeling sick reports to Mrs Quarmby in the office. Boarders report to the B.E. Parents are notified immediately in serious cases.

#### 27. Sleep

Preparatory School boys need at least eight to nine hours sleep per night if they are to work at full potential the following day. Bedtime should be regular and disturbances should be avoided.

Junior boys are often dead tired at the end of the day and may require a short nap on their non-sport afternoon.

Ensuring that your son receives enough regular sleep will allow him to be fully receptive in the classroom.

## 28. Sport Cancellation due to Inclement Weather

A decision will be made at 12:00 as to whether sport is to be cancelled due to inclement weather; please **DO NOT** contact the school secretaries, an sms will be sent to parents.

If rain stops practises in the afternoons the following procedure will be adhered to:

- \* coaches supervise changing and take their charges to a suitably sheltered area in the School;
- \* parents who wish to collect their sons before 16:00 must report to the office and their sons will be called over the public address system;
- \* after 16:00, coaches instruct their team members to proceed to the J.P shelter area to wait for their parents to collect them if it continues to rain;
- \* boys who are not playing sport must automatically proceed to the J.P shelter until they are collected;
- \* boarders will be controlled by the master on duty when released by coaches.

## 29. Sports Kit

The correct sports kit as laid down by the School must be worn at practises and matches. Kit lists are provided at the start of each term. If boys turn up for matches and practises wearing non-regulation sports clothes they will not be permitted to participate, but will remain for the duration of the practice to listen and learn.

After sports practise, the boys need not change back into their School uniform. They may wear a full tracksuit (top and bottom) over their sports clothes and either a cap or basher. Boys must wear their black school shoes home. Boys who do not wish to wear a tracksuit home must change back into full school uniform or wear a blazer over their sports kit. They must, in any event, look neat and tidy.

Boys attending fixture matches in the second and third terms conform to the following regulations:

- \* all team members, excluding the 1st team, must either all wear tracksuits over their kit or blazers only, not both;
- \* all 1st team members must wear a tracksuit and a blazer;
- \* all team members may wear their boots or running shoes to and from fixtures.

Day Boy spectators attending sports matches must wear full School uniform including headgear. However the School blazer may be left off if the weather is hot.

Boarder spectators must wear a full tracksuit over their "blues" when watching sport in the second and third term and full "blues" during other terms.

## 30. Grade and Area Representatives

Grade and Area Representatives serve the School and Boarding Establishment respectively.

The purpose of these committees is to:

- identify common problems;
- facilitate effective communications between parents and the School or Boarding Establishment;
- channel suggestions, criticism or compliments to the appropriate departments; and answer questions from parents requiring clarification on certain issues.

Names and telephone numbers are furnished at the start of each year. Parents are urged to make use of these representatives as their services are worthwhile and benefit Merchiston greatly.

### 31. Stationery

The boys are required to supply their own stationery as itemised by their teachers. Requirement lists are distributed timeously.

### 32. Stockists of Uniforms

The Mud Rat Shop, Merchiston.

The Mud Rat Shop is situated in the Boarding Establishment and is for the benefit of parents who wish to purchase new or used School uniforms and sports kit or who wish to dispose of good quality second hand items.

Once again please ensure that all items of clothing, shoes and towels are marked. A good idea is to mark everything your son brings to School.

During the second and third quarters, boys may wear tracksuit longs to School only if they wear a blazer as well. All tracksuit longs must be removed by teatime.

For any queries related to the Mud Rat Shop, please contact Chris Withers on 033 – 3422269 or 0824501532.

### 33. Suggestion Box

A Suggestion Box can be found in the School foyer and is emptied weekly. Suggestions and constructive criticisms are welcomed. Where possible, suggestions will be acted upon for the general improvement of the School.

### 34. Support Services

All new boys in grades 2 - 5 are tested early in the year and those requiring remedial tuition are referred to the School's remedial teacher. With their parents' permission, they attend remedial lessons twice a week in School time. The lessons are paid for by parents.

Boys requiring specialist intervention by a child psychologist, a speech and hearing or occupational therapist, will be referred when necessary.

Merchiston has a Mastery Class Department where boys who have been identified with learning difficulties may spend on average 2 years, before returning to main stream at Merchiston. The Mastery Classes are run along the same lines as those at schools with remedial units.

All boys are seen on a regular basis by the School nurse.

Should your son experience any problems that worry you, you are very welcome to discuss the issue with any member of staff. An appointment will be required.

### 35. Times (School)

Monday to Thursday:	Grades 3 - 7 :	07h45 to 14h00
	Grades 1 & 2 :	07h45 to 12h20
Friday :	Grades 3 - 7 :	07h45 to 13h00
	Grades 1 & 2 :	07h45 to 12h00
All week :	Grade R :	08h00 to 12h00

Note: Extra-mural times are given at the start of each term.

**No boy may be left at Merchiston before 07h00 each day and boys must be fetched by 17h00 each day. There is nobody on duty to supervise pupils outside of these times.**

### 36. Tuckshop (The Rattery)

The Rattery is open every weekday at lunch time. Wholesome food as well as other oddments and refreshments are for sale. It is also open after School and on Saturday mornings.

### 37. Uniform

- |                                     |                                                |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| - Navy blue blazer and badge        | - School Tie                                   |
| - Navy blue cap and badge           | - Grey flannel shorts                          |
| - Grey socks with School colours    | - Black shoes                                  |
| - Grey pullover with School colours | - Merchiston track suit                        |
| - White short sleeved shirt         | - White straw basher for Gr 7 and all boarders |

Remember to mark all items!

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. If there are any queries, please don't hesitate to contact the School.

We are constantly on the lookout for good suggestions and likewise, receptive to constructive criticism. Please feel at liberty to share your ideas, opinions and perspectives with us.

**D. BEETAR**  
**HEADMASTER**

**SCHOOL CALENDAR 2010**

**1ST TERM:**

13 January : Term begins  
26 March : Term ends

**2ND TERM:**

12 April : Term begins  
9 June : Term ends

**3RD TERM:**

13 July : Term begins  
23 September : Term ends

**4TH TERM:**

04 October : Term begins  
10 December : Term ends