­We thank our alumni for their participation in the meeting held on 1 July. From the testimonies received over the past few weeks, we acknowledge and deeply regret that we have failed in our duty to provide a safe space where all our students, irrespective of their race, feel a deep sense of belonging. Whether the experiences that have been shared so far occurred because of unconscious racial bias or were explicit acts of racism, we recognise that the impact is equally devastating and the hurt has left deep scars.

We are committed to providing an environment in which all the students in our care feel worthy, valued and loved. The Board of Governors and the school management apologise unreservedly for the pain caused and for the school’s failure to protect these students, both past and present. In so doing we acknowledge the right of any individual to lodge a formal written grievance so that the incident reported can be investigated by an objective external party. Please submit your grievances to jlucas@holyrosaryschool.co.za and russell@irons.co.za

As the management of the School we acknowledge that the pace of transformation at Holy Rosary School has been too slow. We have come to realise that this journey of transformation is one that we cannot undertake alone and that we need expert guidance. We have appointed L & N Advisors, who are social justice practitioners with much experience in assisting schools with their transformation journeys. As management we commit to providing both our teachers and students with the critical tools that they need to meaningfully practice racial literacy so that we can truly say that we are an anti-racist school. We recognise that our school must learn and grapple honestly with the critical literacy elements of race, gender, sexuality, class and other aspects of identity in order for our school to truly be a place where no children are harmed because of who they are. We will ensure that we have the correct policies in place to hold people accountable. Part of this process will include that we review our school policies to ensure that none of our policies are inadvertently discriminatory or insensitive to the members of our school community. We recognise that we are an African school on the African continent and therefore we need to make space for adequate opportunities within the curriculum for students to meaningfully grapple with the complexities of their racialised identities and histories; this will require an important pedagogical reorientation so that our students are better prepared for the world beyond the walls of Holy Rosary.

The Transformation and Diversity Committee needs to be reconstituted. Initially we want to establish a Transformation Working Group to lead the process of change over the next 12 months. This group will become the custodians of the transformation process and will hold the school accountable to the timelines and processes that will be set. We will ensure that every stakeholder section from our school community will be represented on this group to support us with the implementation process and the various review processes that must take place. We will soon be extending the invitation for nominations to this Working Group and strongly encourage our alumni to put names forward.

We commit unreservedly to keeping our school community, both past and present, fully informed of this process as it unfolds.

Jacinta Lucas Russell Irons

Head of School Board of Governors Chairperson