



**Provincial Winner**

## **Excellence in teaching Life Skills (Grade 1 – 6)**

**Name:** Ammarah Ford-Pieters  
**School:** Cedar Primary School, Bonteheuwel  
**District:** Metro North

**Ms Ammarah Ford-Pieters is an exceptional Life Skills teacher and with a simple, practical, and inclusive teaching approach. She creates a nurturing classroom environment where every learner, regardless of ability or learning style, thrives.**

Her lessons begin with relatable real-life examples, compelling stories, and engaging role-play activities that bring important topics such as honesty, emotions, and peer pressure to life. This approach not only helps learners understand key concepts but also makes the lessons memorable and relevant. By incorporating drawings, group work, and lively class discussions, she ensures that both visual and social learners remain actively involved. Recognising the importance of emotional wellbeing, Ms Ford-Pieters has innovatively introduced a “feelings box”, allowing learners to express their emotions privately and comfortably. She consistently checks in on learners’ feelings and needs, fostering a supportive atmosphere. Furthermore, an “affirmation station” empowers learners to boost their confidence and self-calming skills during moments of feeling overwhelmed.

Social development is skilfully nurtured through thoughtfully assigned leadership roles such as line leaders, class helpers, and peacekeepers, instilling a sense of responsibility and importance in every learner. Group activities cultivate teamwork and mutual respect, while physical activities, movement breaks, and creative outlets such as drawing,

singing, and storytelling stimulate physical health and self-expression.

Through holistic attention to the emotional, social, physical, and creative needs of her learners, she ensures meaningful growth alongside academic understanding in Life Skills. Her dedication, creativity, and compassion truly embody the values that the NTA seek to recognise.

Despite teaching in a school with limited resources, her initiative and creativity shine through. By personally providing classroom tools, such as whiteboards and a projector, she brings lessons to life in vivid, practical ways. Carefully selected videos spark meaningful discussions while making complex topics like emotions, hygiene, and peer pressure relevant and accessible to every learner. Her commitment to effective teaching is underscored by innovative lesson planning, utilising platforms like Twinkl and AI tools to design engaging, hands-on activities tailored to her learners’ needs. When covering health topics, she bridges the gap between classroom and real life by introducing tangible items such as soap and sanitary products. Learners are encouraged to practice different skills at home, fostering the use of Life Skills beyond the boundaries of school.

Collaboration is a cornerstone of Ms Ford-Pieters’ philosophy. Partnering with a governing body member and police officer, they have played a pivotal role in fostering discipline, fairness, and a culture of respect throughout the school. Her

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community engagement extends further by working with the *Amy Foundation* which have seen doors opening for learners to participate in dance, arts, soccer, and academic support, boosting both self-confidence and creativity. Through collaboration with the *Amy Foundation's* dance choreographer, they are integrating professional expertise into the curriculum, offering learners powerful real-world artistic experiences.

Professional growth and mentorship are also embraced; the guidance from a dedicated subject adviser, as well as experiences as a lead Life Skills teacher, have shaped dynamic teaching practices centred on values and emotional development. Strong collaborative ties with the Circuit-Based Support Team and proactive engagement with parents ensure that every learner receives holistic support. Ultimately, her mission is to make Life Skills practical and meaningful, connecting lessons to everyday life and maximising every educational tool, from technology to teamwork.

She actively engages in continuing professional development (CPD) through formal studies and reflective practice. She recently graduated with her Honours in Education Management and Leadership (*summa cum laude*), and she is currently pursuing her Master's in Leadership and Policy, focusing on teacher job satisfaction and wellbeing.

These studies have deepened her understanding of effective leadership, school culture, and teacher motivation, which directly influence how she

manages her classroom, supports colleagues, and creates a positive learning environment. Her CPD enables her to implement informed strategies that promote both learner engagement and teacher wellness, enhancing overall classroom effectiveness.

She actively organises and participates in school events like the Valentine's Day shows, proms, and concerts, allowing learners to express their creativity and celebrate their diverse talents. These activities build community spirit and cultural appreciation.

As a rugby leader, she promotes teamwork, discipline, and respect, helping learners develop important life skills. She also incorporates traditional and indigenous games to connect learners with their cultural heritage while fostering social interaction. Beyond classroom activities, she serves on the governing body and the Disciplinary Committee, contributing to school policies that support a positive and inclusive learning environment. As Grade 4-head, she leads the grade in promoting collaboration among teachers and learners to enhance academic and social growth.

Her resourcefulness, collaborative spirit, and relentless dedication make a profound and lasting impact on her learners and the broader school community. Her dedication, creativity, and compassion truly embody the values that the NTA seek to recognise.

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