



BIRRONG BULLETIN

The Newsletter of Birrong Girls High School

Cooper Road, Birrong 2143 Telephone: 9644 5057

Issue No. 4

June 2021

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Dear BGHS Community,

COVID safety and ongoing preparedness for Learning from Home

It is the end of Term 2, 2021 and as I write this newsletter entry, the NSW Department of Health has communicated that it is mandated to wear masks indoors at all venues. Even a year ago, who would have thought we would be here, right now, wondering what more COVID will bring?

It is imperative that all members of our community follow the NSW Health Advice about movements, safe practices and testing. We have a Year 12 cohort preparing for the HSC. We have a collective responsibility to ensure that our community is COVID free in support of all, but in particular, Year 12, are not disadvantaged.

We have sent home correspondence asking parents to participate in a survey about access to technology at home in order to prepare for potential lockdown scenarios in future. We also encourage parents to update their contact details through the school office if they have not already done so, in the interest of facilitating efficient and prompt communication. These measures are not about panic, they are about preparation.

Should we find ourselves in lockdown and Learning from Home, we ask parents to be advised of the following:

- All students will be required to log in to their lessons online according to the normal school day and their timetables
- Students who require additional support will receive check-ins from relevant staff
- All students will be contacted by a member of staff allocated to oversee their wellbeing- this could involve communication with their parent or carer also
- Should a student require access to technology, notify the school so that we can make the necessary arrangements
- Students who do not have access to technology or the internet will be provided with work booklets and materials to complete instead.

Parents are reminded that the DoE website has a Learning from Home hub, a HSC hub and Everyday Maths hub where additional learning activities and support materials are available to enhance student learning off-site. These are available now, whether or not there are COVID restrictions.

Rich Learning Activities

We have now completed an entire first semester of 2021. It has passed very quickly. Some students have progressed impressively and taken advantage of the rich learning experiences made available to them. This was communicated explicitly in their reports and at Parent Teacher night, this past Tuesday. Other students have significant improvements to make. The takeaway message always, is that there is always work to be done, there is always something to learn and every day is a new day where good choices can be made.

We have seen our students excel and enjoy representing their school in knockout sporting teams. Two of our junior students made it to state cross country- an amazing achievement. We are writing short stories, poems and novels. We are promoting sustainable practices within our school. We are fundraising to save lives and find cures and make the world a better place.

The moral of all of this is that we have much to be proud of. How little or how much an individual student has achieved is the sum of their efforts, not the wealth or deficit of their opportunities. We encourage all our parents and carers to have these reflective discussions with their children in order to plan the way they will approach semester 2.

Inside this issue:	Page/s
<i>Principal's Report</i>	1-2
<i>Report from the Deputy Principals</i>	2-4
<i>Introducing a New Teacher</i>	4
<i>Welfare Matters</i>	4-5
<i>2021 Jump Rope for Heart Fundraiser</i>	5-6
<i>Regional Cross Country Report</i>	6
<i>MAD for Homelessness Excursion</i>	6
<i>Q+A Program Excursion</i>	6
<i>Library News</i>	7
<i>Year 7 Reptile Incursion</i>	7-8
<i>School Calendar</i>	8
<i>Next P&C Meeting</i>	8
<i>COVID Updates</i>	9

Our Year 11 and Year 12 students know what is expected of them and are also aware of the wealth of support available to them to help them achieve their goals. We encourage them to dig in, hold on and keep pushing. Every year, the girls who take on this advice, apply the feedback given to them and invest the hours of study reap the rewards at the end of the year/course.

Acknowledgements and farewells

As the term draws to a close, I wish to acknowledge a number of our staff members who are leaving or who have left us recently. In TAS, Mrs Sosamma, who dedicated her service to the Department for over two decades, has retired and we wish her a wonderful retirement. We acknowledge and thank Ms Cosar from the English faculty for her work with our students this year and wish her the best in her future endeavours. Mr Da Silva, from PDHPE, has taken up a position at another high school where his talents as a soccer coach will see him overseeing a specialist program. Mr Da Silva has been with us over the past three years and is a much loved member of staff. We look forward to celebrating his future achievements and wish him the best.

We also temporarily farewell Ms Murphy, one of our longstanding office staff, who is going to lead the SASS team at another school for the next six months. We are already missing her and look forward to her return, but celebrate the opportunity she is being given to lead an office team. We wish her every success.

At the Student Excellence Assembly, I addressed our Year 8 and 11 audience by talking to them about the examples of excellence found in female leaders around us- immediately and around the world. I told them about Australian futurist and inventor, Sally Dominguez and her achievements, attitude and perspectives.

As I addressed our audience, I confess that I was thinking of an inspirational female leader much closer to home. This is my opportunity to pay homage to her and acknowledge her significant contributions.

Ms Lord has been a member of our school since 2012. During this time, she has led the PDHPE faculty to nothing short of glory in the definition of educational excellence. She established a warm, collegial and nurturing faculty culture and developed expertise in every one of her staff members. The outcome is that her faculty is one of the highest performing PDHPE faculties in the state and the best that I have ever seen in my 25 years. The team she has led is recognised for above state average results in PDHPE and Community and Family Studies- two extremely popular HSC

courses at our school. Ms Lord has also played a major role in supporting Early Career Teachers and the implementation of Quality Teaching practices at our school. Ms Lord is leaving Birrong Girls to take up a Deputy Principal position at another school. We wish we were not losing her, we wish we could keep her forever, but we are proud of her and know that she is going to continue her stellar work for the Department of Education by serving another school community who will benefit from her expertise and passion for teaching and educational leadership.

On behalf of the entire Birrong Girls High School community, we thank her for her service and we wish her the very best in her future.

Well wishes to our entire school community

I would like to acknowledge the incredibly hardworking staff at Birrong Girls High School. If only you knew the long hours they put in- they do it with passion and commitment. They are the foundation that makes our school the amazing place that it is. Thank you to our Deputy Principals, Ms George, Ms Andrews and Ms Cross for their leadership, care and commitment to all our students and our families. The hours are long (early starts and the latest of finishes) and they do it with a smile and unbending dedication. Thank you to our SASS staff who make it possible for our school to run. They do it with a smile and also, with great care and nurturing of all our students.

On behalf of the staff, I thank all of our supportive parents who work in partnership with us to facilitate the achievements of their daughters.

We wish all our Birrong girls and their families a safe and restful holiday break. We encourage you to sustain your study routines- after all, nothing comes from nothing. We also encourage you to respect COVID restrictions in the interest of everyone's safety.

Zena Dabaja
Principal

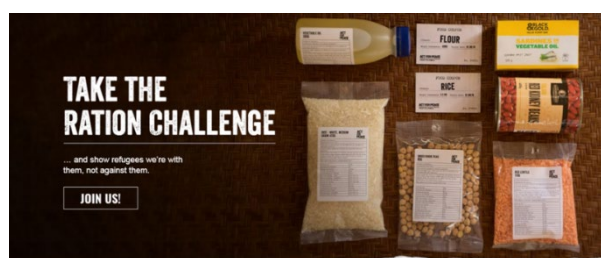
REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

Student engagement and connectedness to school is closely linked to the range of activities and experiences students can and do access as well as the students' feeling of success within the classroom and the school environment.



It has been a very busy term with the athletics carnival, representation at the Zone Cross Country carnival and the increase in the number of excursions which all add to the rich learning experiences available for students. Half yearly reports are issued at the end of this term along with the invitation to visit the school and discuss your daughter's progress with her teachers on Tuesday 22 June.

Once again, our school undertook the wonderful social justice initiative, The Refugee Ration Challenge, for Refugee Week 13-19 June, in which teachers and students eat like a Syrian Refugee. The box contains just a small amount of rice, flour, lentils, chickpeas, beans, fish and oil. It was quite a shock for us to see how little food is provided to refugees and reminds us how fortunate we are to be living in a land of plenty. The money we raise will provide food, medicine and education for refugees and will also go a long way to support other communities around the world threatened by conflict and disaster. Our small part in this global challenge showed what a big heart our Birrong community has. We thank our entire community for their support, raising \$11,588 placing 10th nationally.



Years 7 - 10 have been working hard in PDHPE on their class dances that will form part of their Term 2 assessments. Class

dances work to build negotiation and leadership skills in students and the ability to work as a team to complete a performance task.

Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 students engaged with the Digital Thumbprint program which teaches young people to be safe, responsible and positive in their use of on-line platforms.

A reminder to all students to collect class merits and trade them in with their allocated Deputy Principal for large achievement awards, medallions and school pins. School reports for Years 7-10 will be distributed as normal at the end of the term.

Most of our Year 8 students have continued to work with their teachers to improve their knowledge and understanding in all of their classes. Year 8 students participated in the Check-in assessment which is an online reading and numeracy

assessment. Information from the Check-in tells us how students are performing in literacy and numeracy and helps teachers tailor their teaching more specifically to student needs. They are currently working on a STEAM project which is an approach to learning that uses Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics to guide student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking. This approach is an effective method to motivate students, encourage active learning, and develop key critical-thinking, communication, and decision-making skills.

Year 9 participated for the last time in NAPLAN during May. NAPLAN results provide useful information about student ability that teachers use to plan positive learning opportunities for their students. NAPLAN is also useful for parents because the reports provide a snapshot of their child's ability in literacy and numeracy.

We strive to give our students cultural opportunities that provide insight to varying social perspectives. Many of our Year 9 students had the opportunity to travel to the Wharf Theatre to watch the Sydney Theatre Company's performance of *Playing Beatie Bow*. This excursion was an opportunity for our students to learn about life in Sydney in the 1870's through theatrical performance. Rather than read the original novel, students were able to experience the characters and their relationships through the actors' portrayals. Year 9 also participated in the Helmsman Project which is a program that teaches young people hope, self-regulation and resilience. The program aims to assist students to reach their potential and has many benefits for schools, families and communities.

All Year 9 will engage in a workshop held at the school to promote and develop their leadership, communication and organisational skills. We are very fortunate to be involved in this program which will also support the Resiliency Project the girls work on every Tuesday.

Year 10 students participated in a week of work experience where they were involved in work place practices which were invaluable opportunities for them to develop their interpersonal and communication skills and deal with the responsibilities of their job. Some students walked away from their time at work experience with offers for part time employment from their host work places. A second week of work experience will occur in Term 4 for all Year 10 students. Congratulations to our students who represented the school so well and thanks to Ms Shinas for her organisation. Year 10 students will be working with Ms Shinas in preparation for the selection of their HSC courses. There will be numerous supporting activities to ensure the most appropriate course of study for each student is achieved including a Subject Selection Market, Senior Course Information Sessions, Parent / Student / Teacher

interviews all supported by the Year 10 Careers lessons.

Year 10 are sitting for their first attempt at Minimum Standards testing in Reading, Writing and Numeracy in Weeks 9 and 10. This is a requirement for the award of the Higher School Certificate by the time students finish Year 12.

Year 11 students are now half way through their preliminary HSC courses. During this time, teachers have been marking assessment (formative and summative) tasks and returning them to the students along with structured feedback that acknowledges achievement and provides advice to students about how they can realise their potential in each course. Reports were distributed at the end of Week 7, and please make sure you have seen the report and followed up with discussions relating to the report and future progress.

Reports were distributed to Year 12 at the end of May. Most reports acknowledge what students have achieved and importantly include advice from teachers about what students can do to continue to improve in the course. Students should take note of the advice and build it into their study routine. Year 12 students selected a mentor with the support of their Year Advisers, Ms McDonald and Ms Parmaxidis, during Term 4 2020. Students are taking advantage of the opportunity to meet with their mentors to talk about their progress and the way they are feeling about their study. Good preparation is important but, so too, is good health. As parents, you play a vital role in your daughter's success. Ask about their progress. Ask how they are feeling. Ask if there is anything you can do to help. Encourage them to go for a walk, even if they walk with their earphones in listening to study notes at least they are getting some fresh air and exercise. Encourage them to sleep. Provide healthy meals. Sometimes it's enough for you to just be there for them.

During Term 3 we will be seeking the support of all parents to complete the 'Tell Them from Me – Parent Survey'. The completed student surveys from Semester 1 will provide valuable information for us at the school. Parents will be provided with an opportunity to also inform the school about their concerns related to their daughter's education and high school experiences. More information will be sent home as the survey period approaches.

Ms George, Ms Andrews and Ms Cross
Deputy Principals

More support



Visit ReachOut.com for more mental health support or call:

- Lifeline on 13 11 14
- Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800
- Your GP

INTRODUCING A NEW TEACHER

Mariam El-Kiki
Social Sciences/History/English

Hi everyone, my name is Mariam El-Kiki. This is my second year as a teacher and only my first week at Birrong Girls High School! I am so grateful for this opportunity and am really excited to meet the Birrong Girls High School community. I look forward to building productive, meaningful and supportive relationships with students, staff and parents.

At university, I studied a Master of Teaching with a major in History and English, and a minor in English as a Second Language. Being a teacher has been one of the most rewarding experiences for me; although I am here to provide students with the best education, every day I too learn something new.

Outside of the classroom, I regularly immerse myself in nature through hiking, gardening and horse riding. I have been riding horses for over six years. I hope to one day adopt my own horse! I am also an indoor plant hoarder and you'll often find me wandering the plant aisle at my local nursery.

I am so fortunate to work amongst a team that shares the same passion with me in their teaching, and I sincerely thank the staff and students at Birrong Girls High School for being so welcoming, supportive and understanding in my new journey at this school.

WELFARE MATTERS

The Resilience Project

The Resilience Project is a program that we have implemented across the school this year where students engage in weekly lessons which are based on the principles of gratitude, empathy, mindfulness (GEM) and emotional literacy. The

overall aim of the program is to build resilience and happiness in our students. The principles are:

Gratitude – Paying attention to the things that we have right now, and not worrying about what we don't have. We practise this by noticing the positives that exist around us.

Empathy – Putting ourselves in the shoes of others to feel and see what they do. We practice this through being kind and compassionate towards other people.

Mindfulness – Our ability to be calm and present at any given moment. We practice this through slowing down and concentrating on one thing at a time. This could be our breathing, completing a colouring sheet or noticing the noises we can hear.

Emotional Literacy – Our ability to label our emotions as we experience them. Labelling our emotions helps us to manage our emotions (soften negative emotions and find positive emotions). We practice this by labelling our emotions as we experience different parts of our day.

We ask that you demonstrate and role model the GEM principles as often as you can at home. To assist there are some **GEM CHAT** questions below that you can use at different times daily over each week. These daily questions will support the use of GEM principles with members of your family. We know if you practise these principles as part of your daily routine they will become a habit. Research has shown that making these principles a habit will improve one's happiness and resilience. We also think it is a great way to facilitate positive conversations with your family. As a parent, it is really important that you demonstrate these behaviours by answering the questions too.

GRATITUDE GEM CHAT QUESTIONS

- What were three things that went well for you today?
- Who is someone you feel really grateful for today? Tell us why.
- What is it about our home that makes it our home/special family place?
- What is something you are looking forward to tomorrow?

EMPATHY GEM CHAT QUESTIONS.

- Who is someone you know who may be experiencing some difficulty currently? What could we do for them as a family?
- Remember someone who has done something kind for you recently. What did they do for you?
- Say something kind to someone in your home.

MINDFULNESS GEM QUESTIONS

- How did you practice mindfulness today? These are things like meditation, yoga, puzzles, spot the difference, colouring.
- What mindfulness activity are you going to do tomorrow?

- What is your favourite mindfulness activity?
- How do you feel after you do a mindfulness activity?

Digital Thumbprint Workshops

All Year 7 to 10 students participated in these workshops during Week 7. The workshops focused on the responsible use of digital and social media platforms and to ensure students are aware of the security issues and the legal consequences of internet use and misuse.

Student of the Month



Congratulations to Alyaa Kutti of Year 12 who has been awarded the Student of the Month award for April 2021. She has demonstrated leadership, initiative and responsibility to the school community. She is a mature and diligent student with a positive attitude toward all aspects of her schooling and is an excellent role model for her peers.

Alyaa has carried out valuable school service through her commitment and active involvement in various programs and the school Media team. She shows responsibility, leadership and dedication as a member of the school Media Team where she aids and guides newer members. She is a hard working member who has been the photographer, videographer and sound room controller at many school events and has contributed to the production of many media publications. Alyaa has been a motivated Peer Support Leader, supporting the transition processes of our Year 7 students. Her strong leadership qualities have been recognised through being a finalist in the area of Leadership in the Bankstown Youth Awards in 2020. Her future goal is to attend university to attain a degree in the medical or IT fields or a combination of the two.

Mrs Salvagio

Head Teacher Female Students

2021 JUMP ROPE FOR HEART FUNDRAISER

Our school is participating in the Heart Foundation **Jump Rope for Heart** charity fundraising program again this year. Jump Rope for Heart is an exciting program which encourages children to become more active through skipping, learning new skills and raising vital funds for heart research into the cause, diagnosis and prevention of heart disease in Australia.

Unfortunately, our Jump off was cancelled last term due to rain. We have rescheduled the event for Tuesday 17 August (Week 6, Term 3). The Jump off will involve Year 8 students and Year 9 Physical Activity and Sports Studies students who will take on the role of team leaders.

Thank you to those students that have raised money both online and through cash donations.

Mrs Lord
Head Teacher PDHPE

REGIONAL CROSS COUNTRY REPORT

On Wednesday 9 June, I had the privilege of taking 12 students from Birrong Girls High School to represent the Edmondson Zone at Regional Cross Country from all ages 12 to 18 years.

The girls persevered and endured a tough terrain, steep hills and muddy grounds to finish the 4km course. Two students, Amara Mikati 12 years and Zaynab El-Biza 13 years progressed to the State Cross Country qualifying in the top 10 places.

A fantastic achievement by all participants.

Ms Graham
PDHPE Faculty

MAD FOR HOMELESSNESS EXCURSION

On the night of 14 May, the Prefect Body, alongside Ms Boyle, Ms Mezzino and Ms Dabaja, participated in the MAD for Homelessness charity at Yurong Parkway, Woolloomooloo. We distributed clothing and other essentials to the homeless. Crates and bags which contained the resources were brought to the venue by truck and we assisted in finding people in need of appropriate items. It was a great experience as we had an opportunity to provide our community with the resources they need. It was an incredible experience which allowed us to engage with some of the charities and non-profit organisations that help our community significantly, including the Exodus Food Van, who distribute free meals 364 days year, and the Friars, who brew hot chocolate and tea for the homeless.

The Prefects have been fundraising throughout the year to donate to MAD for Homelessness. Proceeds from fundraising chocolates, sausage sizzles and other events will be donated to helping this charity purchase new stock to distribute.

We were also given an opportunity to learn and ask questions about the various charities, and met the rest of the volunteers who give up their time to help others. Their dedication and enthusiasm is admirable and has inspired us all to endeavour to volunteer with this charity or other charities alike in the future. Their cordiality and optimism was welcoming and encouraged us to participate with more confidence too. This excursion, overall, was a valuable experience which allowed us to give back and assist our community, which brought a feeling of happiness to us all.

By: Sidra Abdallah, Year 12

Q+A PROGRAM EXCURSION



On 27 May, the Prefect body and Senior SRC attended a filming of Q+A at ABC studios in Ultimo. Q+A is a current affairs program where the audience asks questions of an expert panel and is broadcast live on ABC.

The panelists speaking on the day were Jennifer Robinson, Human Rights Lawyer, Mitch Tambo, singer and songwriter, Dave Sharma, Liberal Member for Wentworth, Ed Husic, Labor Member for Chifley, Randa Abdel-Fattah, author and academic.

The episode focused on Trauma and Truth-Telling, covering big issues such as reconciliation and equality in the Middle East. As Australia marked Reconciliation Week, the students were enthusiastic about participating in the discussion of the country's journey towards Indigenous recognition and the actions needed to be taken to amplify the voices of First Nations people. The episode also discussed the government's role in grappling with vaccine hesitancy. A heated debate was also had based on the ceasefire on the Gaza strip and how this impacts Australians.

Over the one-hour program, we were captivated by the panelists' informative discussions. We actively listened and nodded our heads dramatically and applauded when we heard something we liked. It was phenomenal to be a part of an audience and we were engaged and represented the school with utmost pride. The night ended with an amazing performance by Mitch Tambo who sang Dreamtime Princess live! We clapped along and were amazed by his musical talents.

Being an audience at Q+A was an amazing opportunity and every student enjoyed the privilege of watching the panelists debate controversial issues.

By: Hajer Al-Mosawi, Prefect

LIBRARY NEWS

Winter is always a busy time in the library. It is the perfect shelter from the cold when a book can take hold of the imagination and fire it up! We also have activities for colouring in, Lego building, crochet/knitting and puzzle making. This term three students spent a month assembling a 1,000-piece puzzle and it looked magnificent! Don't they look proud in the photo!



This term we participated in the National Simultaneous Storytime from space! An astronaut from the International Space Station read the book "Give me some space" by Philip Bunting. After the reading we were able to find out how astronauts live and eat in space. Not only 8G but Mr Thorpe and I were fascinated!



Next term we have a number of reading activities. The 2021 Premier's Reading Challenge will finish on Friday 20 August. Certificates will be presented in Term 4. Here are some previous challenge completers!



Book Week will be celebrated in the last week of August. There will be competitions and plenty of prizes! See the library for entry forms. The other exciting activity will be the KOALA Awards voting day for Australia's favourite books!



Mr Davidson
Teacher Librarian

YEAR 7 REPTILE INCURSION

On Wednesday 16 June, Year 7 were invited to attend the reptile show in the school hall. Much excitement had been building up with students canvassing the experiences of past years and deciding this was an experience not to be missed.

The show began with ranger Mick slowly revealing the animals and educating students about how they should handle the animals appropriately. He also highlighted their current survival prospects and where they could be found. He began with a small tortoise and then worked through a number of lizards and cane toads before revealing the larger attractions. The stars of the show were Rosie, a 2-meter alligator, and an 18Kg python.

Ranger Mick then provided advice on how to manage a snake bite to ensure that students were aware of what to do should they unfortunately experience or see a snake bite over the summer.

Girls were then given time to move around the hall and touch and feel the animals. Many were apprehensive at first but quickly gained the confidence needed to get the most out of the experience.

It was pleasing to see so many girls engaging with the experience and overcoming their fears of these animals. Based on the smiles and excitement, the incursion was a success with many students having had an experience that they had never had before.



Bassma and Mishaal with a shingle back



Mona with a tortoise



Mya with a python

Mr Saule
Head Teacher Science

BIRRONG GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL CALENDAR

June:

Friday, 25th

▪ Last day of Term 2

Enjoy the School Holidays!

July:

Monday, 12th

▪ Staff return to school – School Development Day

Tuesday, 13th

▪ **All students return to school**

Wednesday, 14th

▪ Year 10 Subject Market

Thursday, 15th

▪ Year 10 Subject Selection Info Session, p4
▪ Senior First Aid Course

Friday, 16th

▪ Senior First Aid Course

Monday, 26th to
Friday, 30th

▪ **EDUCATION WEEK**
▪ Year 11 Hospitality Work Placement

August:

Monday, 2nd to
Friday, 6th

▪ Year 11 Hospitality Work Placement

Friday, 6th

▪ Year 10 Vaccinations



BIRRONG GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL PARENTS & CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Parents are invited to attend the
P & C MEETING
on Wednesday 11 August 2021
at 5pm



BIRRONG GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

Principal: Zena Dabaja
BA (Hons) DipEd

Telephone: (02) 9644 5057

Cooper Road
BIRRONG 2143

COVID Updates

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are reviewing our plans to ensure we can continue to teach our students if ever students and staff are unable to attend school. Last year Birrongo Girls High School students moved successfully to learning from home and we want to make sure they can do it again if ever they need to.

To help us ensure your child can participate in classes from home, I am asking:

- parents and carers who do not have a device or internet access at home
- parents and carers whose home address or phone contact details have changed or need updating

to complete this short survey, you can connect to through the following link:

<https://forms.office.com/r/enQhAs7WRw>.

Our teachers are already using Google Classroom and email to share resources and communicate with students. This means that we can move swiftly to online learning should it be necessary.

I will communicate with you immediately if our staff and students are unable to attend school and in the first instance, all classes will be based on the existing timetable for all students. Any change to this will be communicated to you.

I encourage all our families to become familiar with the parent resources from the e-safety commissioner to assist your child to be safe online. This link <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/covid-19> provides access to these resources.

Yours sincerely,

Zena Dabaja
Principal
22 June 2021