



BIRRONG BULLETIN

The Newsletter of Birrongo Girls High School

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PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Dear Parents,

Welcome to **Ms Tracey Cross** who was appointed to the Deputy Principal position at Birrongo Girls in week four of this term. Ms Cross replaces Mrs Crossan who has retired from teaching after a long and successful career. Ms Cross has a rich background in education, having started her career as a PDHPE teacher at Lurnea High School. Following this, she was appointed to Canley Vale High School and later Miller High School as Head Teacher PDHPE. Ms Cross then worked as a Senior Education Adviser at the Board of Studies and more recently was the head of the Department's Drug Prevention Programs. Prior to her appointment to Birrongo Girls, Ms Cross was Deputy Principal at Cecil Hills High School. She brings a wealth of experience to the deputy principal position which will only enhance the quality of education at our school.

Congratulations to **Mr Scott Clark** who was appointed to the position of Head Teacher Administration through the merit selection process. Mr Clark is an outstanding Science teacher and administrator. He is largely responsible for the school's technology infrastructure and has led staff training and development in the area of technology, most notably training staff in specific technology platforms such as Sentral, and in the use of interactive whiteboards. Mr Clark is highly respected by staff, students and parents for his fairness and consistency, dedication to school improvement and commitment to public education.

Congratulations also to **Ms Rebecca Lee** who was recognised for her outstanding leadership and commitment to school improvement at the Principals' Celebration event on 29 October.



2015 has been another very rewarding year at Birrongo Girls High School. The achievements and positive attitudes of the students, combined with the dedication and commitment of the staff, have certainly made this year highly successful.

Yearly reports reflect these achievements and will be distributed to Years 7 – 10 during week 10 of this term. Reports include comments from teachers which indicate strengths and areas targeted for improvement. Students should consider their reports carefully and heed their teachers' advice to help overcome any issues experienced with their school work. It is also important that students reflect on the 'Application to Learning' section of the report. It indicates the extent to which a student works to the best of her ability and applies herself to the demands of her subjects. All students should be achieving 'always' in this section.

I encourage all parents to read their daughter's report carefully, discuss teachers' comments with their daughter and acknowledge and praise excellent achievement and offer encouragement for improvement.

ANNUAL PRESENTATION DAY

An invitation is extended to all parents and students of Birrongo Girls High School to attend our Annual Presentation Day on

Monday 7 December 2015

Please arrive 11:45am for 12:00pm start

The venue for the function will be **Bankstown Sports Club Theatre
8 Greenfield Parade, Bankstown**

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2016	

We will meet our Year 7 students for 2016 at their **Orientation Day on Thursday 3 December**. Demand for enrolments has been extraordinarily high; as a result, enrolments for Year 7 for 2016 are now closed. Many families in the local community have heard about the high quality teaching and learning that happens at Birrong and want their daughters to be a part of our success.

Michael Grose, regarded as one of Australia's leading authorities on parenting, will present a workshop on the Orientation Day. At this entertaining and engaging workshop entitled, *Help, I'm about to have a Teenager*, Michael will discuss a number of strategies and ideas for our new Year 7 parents on coping with adolescents.

On Monday 7 December the school community will celebrate the outstanding academic, sporting and extra-curricular achievements of the girls at our **Presentation Day at the Bankstown Sports Club from 12pm**. Parents and friends are warmly invited to participate in this important recognition ceremony.

The Year 12 class of 2015 applied themselves to their studies with diligence and sustained effort and deserve to do well. I look forward to receiving notification of their **HSC results on Wednesday 16 December**. Many will achieve very high Australian Tertiary Admission Ranks (ATAR) and pursue further study at university or TAFE, while others will enter the workforce. Regardless of their results and ATAR scores, the values of personal excellence, respect, responsibility, cooperation, integrity, understanding, tolerance and inclusion, integral to this school and public education, will serve them well. They leave this school well prepared for life-long learning with skills and knowledge to take their place as active, productive and responsible citizens in our society. They can be proud to have been students of Birrong Girls High School.

Congratulations to...

- Narelle Scerri (Year 11) who was presented with the Jason Clare Award for Community Service on 19 November at Bankstown Sports Club.
- Amar Hamed (Year 11) who received the Auburn Reviews' School Citizenship Award at a ceremony on 18 November.
- Hamna Ahmad (Year 11) who received the Victor Chang School Science Award at the Bankstown Library and Knowledge Centre on Monday 2 November.

Thank you to...

- all the teachers and the administration staff who have worked so hard and selflessly throughout 2015 to make Birrong Girls such an exciting, interesting, dynamic and successful school. Their efforts are appreciated and celebrated by our girls in classrooms every day.

- the Deputy Principal, Ms George, the relieving Deputy Principals (Mr Saule, Ms Feld and Ms Andrews) and all our Head Teachers who have given me enormous support in this my first year as principal; their talent, creativity, cooperation and hard work are greatly appreciated.
- the small and dedicated band of parents who contribute their time and energy to the school's P&C.

P&C meeting

I extend a warm invitation to all our parents to attend the final P&C meeting which will be held on **Wednesday 25 November at 5pm in the Common Room**. We will be discussing the **school's targets and plans for 2016** so come along and have your say.

On behalf of the school, I would like to wish you all a safe and relaxing holiday, a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Best wishes,
Margaret Fletcher
Principal

INTRODUCING OUR NEW DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

Hi. I'm Tracey Cross, the school's new Deputy Principal. Ms Fletcher outlined my previous experiences earlier in the bulletin.



I am happy to be working at your school. I have a strong interest in the effect of student wellbeing on learning and I am keen to get to know students and their families.

I also have lots of experience leading work in the areas of curriculum and assessment which is what I did during my time at the NSW Board of Studies. Making sure we know our students and how they learn is an important part of a teacher's responsibility, as is providing a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do. I am enthusiastic about supporting and influencing the way teachers work with students in their classrooms.

While I was preparing to start at Birrong Girls High School I looked closely at the school plan and was pleased to read the school's vision statement *"every girl becomes a successful learner, a confident and creative individual, and an active and informed citizen."*

I look forward to working with the teachers who will guide the students on their journey.

REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

As the school year for 2015 draws to a close, it is a great time to reflect on personal and whole school community achievements.

Foremost is our school's commitment to the delivery of Quality Teaching. Birrong Girls High School teachers take enormous pride in the quality of the teaching which occurs in each classroom. Our ongoing Quality Teaching partnership with Newcastle University continues to improve the effectiveness of lesson delivery and assessment of student understanding and also assists teachers in improving the value of teacher feedback to students and parents.

During Term 4, Year 7 students have experienced and enjoyed Field Day and Swim School. These events provided students with time to develop skills, teamwork and leadership qualities in the context of fun activities.

Year 8 students participated in the VALID online Science testing during Week 6 and enjoyed their combined Science/Geography excursion to Penrith Lakes.

Year 9 students demonstrated their leadership skills at the Year 4/5 Enrichment Day on Thursday 12 November when they supported Year 4 and 5 students in experiencing a typical day at high school.

We hope the Year 7, 8 and 9 students attending the Attendance Rewards Activity Day have a great time and enjoy all the activities at Teen Ranch. It is a great day to reward students who have shown dedication and commitment to their attendance over the year. Excellent attendance has a positive impact on the achievement of educational outcomes.

Year 10 students are completing their second work experience block in Week 8 and all students have the opportunity to gain valuable workplace experiences. Thanks to Ms Wailes and the Year 10 teachers who will visit and mentor students whilst they are out in the *real world* of work. Year 10 students will remain hard at work as they complete 'All My Own Work', a mandatory Board of Studies requirement for all students entering Year 11. Year 10 students will conclude the year with leadership training through their participation in Peer Support Training.

Year 11 participated in the compulsory Crossroads program through PDHPE. The day provided students with a greater understanding of the consequences of personal choices in various life situations. The students experienced presentations by young adults whose lives have been affected by risk-taking behaviours and poor life choices.

Year 12 officially signed out of school on 18 November and attended their Formal on 19 November, a night that celebrated the end of this chapter in their lives. We wish them all the very best in their future endeavours.

The last day of the year for all students is Wednesday 16 December. All students are expected to be at school on time every day in full school uniform up until that day.

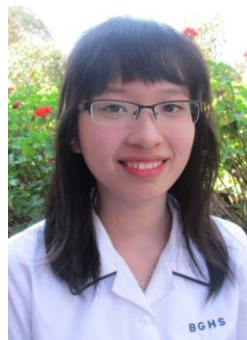
Ms George and Ms Cross
Deputy Principals

WELFARE REPORT

Vaccinations

The vaccination program for Year 7 was completed this term. Students who have been absent on any day during the vaccination program this year will be able to have their vaccination catch up in Term 1 2016.

Student of the Month Award



Congratulations to Rachel Hwang of Year 11 who has been awarded the Student of the Month Award for October. She has demonstrated outstanding academic achievement and has excelled in all her subjects. Rachel has a strong work ethic and has shown exceptional determination, having achieved first place in the yearly exams in five subjects. She has participated in the Australian Mathematics Competition and was a strong participant of the Great Engineering Challenge. She actively and enthusiastically promoted and assisted with the organisation and the running of the school's Spelling Bee.

Rachel enjoys the challenge of chess and is a member of the school chess club. She has a passion for music and hopes to continue learning to play the piano and the clarinet. She also enjoys swimming and is hopeful of achieving a bronze medallion.

Year 4/5 Enrichment Day

On Thursday 12 November we held our annual Year 4/5 Enrichment Day where students from Auburn West Public, Bankstown North Public, Berala Public, Birrong Public and Regents Park Public spent an active day in our school participating in various lessons and performances.



Year 4/5 Enrichment Day

The school's Welfare Team members would like to thank all the parents and guardians for their support and encouragement of our students throughout the year. We wish all the students and their families a wonderful school vacation and look forward to a very successful 2016 school year.

Mrs Salvagio
Head Teacher Welfare

CAREERS NEWS

Year 9 Work Education



On Wednesday 11 November the Year 9 Work Education class attended a Taste of TAFE workshop day at Lidcombe TAFE. The students were able to choose to participate in 3 different workshops including Floristry, Events, IT, Building, Hairdressing and Beauty, Design, Electro technology and many more. This event gave our students the chance to experience a taste of various courses and career pathways in a "hands on" environment. Students were also able to view TAFE facilities and speak to current students and staff about training and career options. The Year 9 Work Education class were enthusiastic, eager to learn and commended on their exemplary behaviour. All students and myself had a wonderful day at the TAFE and learnt a lot of new and valuable knowledge and skills.



Taste of TAFE workshop day

Year 11

After four successful weeks of the Year 11 Readiness program, our Year 11 students are prepared to start thinking about Year 12 and their future. During these workshops Year 11 was given advice and information regarding their future careers including how to choose a career, pathways after school, the UAC application process, bonus points, entry schemes and much more. Year 11 were also told to book in an appointment with me for a one-on-one interview to start discussing their career plans. Parents are advised to start discussing their daughter's career plans at home and encourage them to book an appointment with the Careers Adviser.

Western Sydney U Day

Year 11 were invited to attend the Western Sydney U Day on Thursday 29 October. This event was designed to help students prepare for university and their career journey. Students were given the opportunity to explore the range of courses available at the university by attending seminars and presentations. Students were also able to meet current students and staff and ask any questions they had about courses, careers and university life. Western Sydney University went above and beyond for our students on this day and showcased what an excellent tertiary institution they are. Feedback from all students was extremely positive and everyone, including myself and Ms Bolanca, thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and learnt much valuable information.

Ms Wailes
Careers Adviser

YEAR 10 AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY EXCURSION

On 29 October the Year 10 Australian Society class attended an excursion to the NSW Parliament House in Macquarie Street, Sydney. The students sat in the public gallery of both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council on sitting days and therefore witnessed the lively debates and discussions between the Members of Parliament. The Member of Bankstown, Tania Mihailuk, was very generous with her time as she met with the students and also purchased drinks for them in the MPs' cafe. Luke Foley, Member for Auburn and the Labor Opposition Leader, also took the time to meet and chat with our students.

Mrs Salvagio



Luke Foley MP and Tania Mihailuk MP with our students

CAPA REPORT

VISUAL ARTS

Potts Hill Community Art Project

Earlier in the year, our Year 10 Visual Art students were involved in working on a community art project in collaboration with the Potts Hill Public Art Plan. This project presented a great opportunity for the students to have direct involvement in the planning and execution of the art design for intended sites within the Potts Hill area. The students finalised these designs early in Term 3 and we are excited to be informed that they are now being fabricated and installation at the Potts Hill site will take place before the end of the year. Keep an eye on the site for our student designs and an announcement of a date for the official unveiling.

Artist in Residence

We are grateful to have had indigenous artist, Leanne Tobin, in our school as part of an Artist in Residence program. Leanne started working with our Visual Art classes in Week 3 this term and will conclude her time with us at the end of Week 7. Leanne is a Darug artist born in Waratah, Newcastle and she now resides in the Blue Mountains. In 2012 Leanne won the prestigious NSW Parliament Aboriginal Art Prize with her moving symbolic work, 'Defending Country'. She has had extensive teaching experience in various institutions, all the while practising her own art. She proudly joins us to share her own background and stories about her heritage, as well as to enlighten the students about her own artist practice. Leanne has been working with our Visual Art students across all year groups. A key focus of her time with our faculty is to help create a new mural design to grace the wall in Tumbalong. This design is currently in the process of being composed by our Year 9 and Year 10 elective students and we hope to have a new painted mural in Tumbalong by mid-2016.

MUSIC

JMC Academy Workshop

Year 9, 10 and 11 elective music classes had the opportunity to attend JMC Academy on Friday 16 October for an interactive workshop. JMC Academy is a contemporary tertiary institution providing students with the ability to study music, sound, performance, animation, production and other courses. Their new campus in Ultimo has the latest facilities and technology that meet professional industry standards.

The morning session involved the girls working with a music software tool called Ableton live. In no time at all the students were able to mix some of their own tracks with the software. After a delicious lunch, there were two more sessions of performance and music recording. The performance session provided students with the opportunity to hear some current JMC students play on stage and jam along on their own instruments. The final session took place in a recording studio where professionals demonstrated how they record live instruments. A display of 'Vegas Mode' was a hit with the students (Google: 'Vegas Mode' for more info). The day was a fantastic experience for the students to get an insight into the music industry.

By: CAPA Faculty

WHOOPING COUGH Advice to parents

There is an outbreak of whooping cough (pertussis) in NSW, mainly affecting school-aged children.

Coughing spreads the infection to others nearby. Whooping cough can spread to anyone at home, including younger brothers and sisters. Whooping cough can be especially dangerous for babies.

Whooping cough starts like a cold and progresses to bouts of coughing that can last for many weeks. The infection can occur even in fully-vaccinated children. Older children may just have a cough that is persistent and may be worse at night.

- Children with these symptoms should see a doctor.
- If your doctor diagnoses whooping cough in your school-aged child, please let the school know and keep your child at home until they have taken 5 days of antibiotics. Keep coughing children away from babies.
- Whooping cough vaccines give good protection against infection but immunity fades with time. Check that all your children are up to date with their vaccines, due at 6 weeks, 4 months, 6 months, 4 years and 12 years of age (offered to all Year 7 students through the NSW school-based vaccination program). A booster is also recommended at 18 months of age.

A booster dose of vaccine is also recommended for adults that are in contact with young children, such as school staff and parents. Pregnant women are recommended to have a booster dose during each pregnancy and this is funded by NSW Health. Those who are new parents or carers of babies should consult their general practitioner about appropriate immunisation.

Your local public health unit can provide advice about whooping cough on 1300 066 055 or visit the NSW Health website for [information for childcare and schools about whooping cough](#).



BIRRONG GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL PARENTS & CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Parents are invited to attend the
P & C MEETING
on Wednesday 25 November 2015
at 5pm in the Common Room

Parents are reminded that the last day of the 2015 school year for Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 students at Birrong Girls High School will be **Wednesday 16 December**. School development days will be held on Thursday 17 December and Friday 18 December. *School development days at the start and end of semesters allow teachers to undergo further professional training.*

BIRRONG GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL CALENDAR *For your diary / noticeboard*

November:	
Monday, 23 rd to Friday, 27 th	▪ Year 10 Work Experience
Wednesday, 25 th	▪ P&C Meeting, Common Room, 5pm
Thursday, 26 th and Friday, 27 th	▪ Year 7 Swim School + Year 9PASS
December:	
Tuesday, 1 st and Wednesday, 2 nd	▪ Year 10 Peer Support Training
Thursday, 3 rd	▪ Year 6 Orientation Day, 9:15am – 12:30pm
Monday, 7 th	▪ Presentation Day at Bankstown Sports Club, 11:45am – 2pm
Monday, 7 th to Friday, 11 th	▪ Year 12 Business Services Work Placement
Tuesday, 8 th	▪ Attendance Rewards Activity Day at Teen Ranch
Thursday, 10 th and Friday, 11 th	▪ Year 10 Camp Yarramundi
Wednesday, 16 th	▪ Last day of the school year for students
Thursday, 17 th	▪ School Development Day for staff
Friday, 18 th	▪ School Development Day for staff

**Very best wishes for the festive season to all.
Enjoy the holiday break!**



January 2016:	
Monday, 25 th	▪ School Holidays
Tuesday, 26 th	▪ Australia Day Public Holiday
Wednesday, 27 th	▪ School Development Day - staff return to school
Thursday, 28 th	▪ Years 7, 11 & 12 return to school
Friday, 29 th	▪ All other year groups return to school

When cyberbullying hits home

At a glance

- Bullying that occurs online or via technology is called cyberbullying.
- Online relationships can be different to face-to-face relationships.
- Hurtful comments and embarrassing photos posted online are potentially there forever.
- Solutions to cyberbullying need a whole community approach, not just schools or parents working in isolation.
- Filters only block certain content and aren't a solution to cyberbullying.
- Parents need to be aware of the technology their kids are using, and learn to use it as well.



In a world where friends are made with the click of a mouse, it's probably not surprising that relationships are just as easily terminated.

In fact, the *New Oxford American Dictionary's* word of the year for 2009 was 'unfriend'. Defined by Oxford University Press as: "to remove someone as a 'friend' on a social networking site such as Facebook", the word's popularity gives an insight into the volatile nature of many online friendships.

So is unfriending just unfriendly, or is it cyberbullying? What if a group of school mates gang up and publicly unfriend your child all at once – does that constitute bullying? And does the definition of cyberbullying really matter when your child feels hurt?

Bullying knows no bounds

Tilly was about 14 years old when she was cyberbullied by a school friend. Her mum Hannah says the abuse, which lasted about 12 months, started online but affected the family offline as well.

"[Months later] I was up at the bus stop near my youngest child's school, with the Jif and a cloth, rubbing out rude graffiti about Tilly."

In the online world, it can be even harder to clean up the mess. Many kids still don't realise that comments and photos they post online could be there forever, or that once it's out there, you can't control who sends it on and who sees it.

This potentially permanent record of humiliation also makes it easy for kids who are being bullied to reread the abuse, and relive the trauma.

A parent's perspective

Hannah says, with hindsight, she didn't know enough about her daughter's online social life, mainly because the technology was still quite new.

"Tilly leapt into that world very quickly using MySpace, MSN and texting," Hannah says. "I probably didn't keep up with her and what she was doing online as much as I should have. Whereas now I have a Facebook page and [the girls] have added me as a friend. I can look at what they're doing, what comments and what photos they have, and things like that. Before, it was all new and Tilly was quite secretive about it."

Researchers say many kids won't tell their parents about cyberbullying, fearing the parent will overreact, and either make matters worse or completely ban them from the internet or mobile phone. Hannah

says she felt very frustrated about not knowing the best way to deal with it. "I tried to not inflame the situation, but I probably did."

Taking control of the problem

One of the important things Hannah did do was control the '24/7' nature of the contact, rather than ban her daughter's online access.

"When the phone bill was getting ridiculous at one point, I made a rule that everyone's mobile phone had to be on the kitchen bench by 9.00pm, so that the kids could go to bed without that interruption," she says.

Hannah also spoke with the school and the school counsellor.

"I tried to leave it at some point for them to resolve, but it's not wholly a school issue," she says.

"It goes beyond the bounds of what a school can deal with. It's not all happening within school time."

Who's responsible when cyberbullying hits home?

Child behaviour experts agree that cyberbullying is predominantly a relationship issue, not a technology issue. So who is responsible for teaching kids how to behave online, and what do parents do when their child is faced with cyberbullying?

The authors of the 2008 research paper [Behind the Scenes: Insights into the Human Dimension of Covert Bullying](#) describe the dilemma well:

"What has changed are the boundaries between home and school ... and between what is acceptable behaviour and what is not."

While schools are making it a priority to address cyberbullying (and good digital-citizenship) in their policies and curricula, the problem needs a whole community approach. Solutions also need to involve social media outlets, cyber bystanders, parents and the government.

Parents have to be participants

One of the world's leading experts on cyberbullying, Professor Donna Cross, says the most important thing we parents can do is be involved and familiar with our kids' online lives.

"Because most cyberbullying happens in the home, parents need to be aware of the technology that young people are using, so that they can be in that space with them and look at the ways in which they are engaging with their friends," Donna says.

"It's easy for parents to see friendships developing when they're face-to-face, but parents don't understand how those friendships develop online, so parents need to be talking to their children from a very young age about where they're going and what they're doing online – and go and have a practise there themselves."

What if you're just not interested in/ too busy to explore online social networking? Sadly, that doesn't let you off the hook. No amount of filters will replace your active involvement in your child's online life.

That's partly because filters only block certain content. Your child will still have their mobile phone, email accounts, chat rooms and possibly even their gaming equipment through which they can interact with the outside world.

But it's also because when your child faces relationship challenges in their social life (online or offline), you need to have enough shared experiences and understanding of their world for them to feel it's worth telling you. *School A to Z*

TRANSPORT NEWS



The **School Opal card** gives eligible students free or discounted travel between home and school, using the train, bus and ferry services you nominate in your application.

To be eligible for a School Opal card, students may need to live a minimum distance from their school (for high school students: 2.0km straight line distance or 2.9km walking).

All students with a current school travel pass will automatically receive a School Opal card, through school, at the beginning of the school year in 2016. Note: if you have changed your address, please see Miss Sam at Reception.

Students without a current school travel pass who wish to apply (and are eligible) for the School Opal card can complete an application online.

How to apply for a School Opal card:

Step 1 – Complete the application at transportnsw.info/school-students

Step 2 – Print, sign and date the completed application, then submit it to the school for endorsement

Step 3 – The school then sends the endorsed application to Transport for NSW. Once approved, the School Opal card will be sent to the address provided on the application.

Note: A parent or guardian must apply for students 15 years and under. Students 16 years and over must apply for themselves.

BANKSTOWN CITY COUNCIL'S FREE BUS TO BEACH PROGRAM 2016

Bankstown City Council is providing free buses to Cronulla Beach for local residents on the following days:

- Tuesday, 12 January
- Thursday, 14 January
- Tuesday, 19 January
- Thursday, 21 January



BUS 1 and 2 will depart from the following pick up points

- 9am – The Roundabout Youth Centre, Helen Street cnr Carlingford Road, Sefton
- 9:15am – Greenacre Area Community Centre, 171a Waterloo Road, Greenacre
- 9:30am – 69 The Mall, Bankstown (on Paul Keating Park side, opposite Lincraft)

BUS 3 and 4 will depart from the following pick up points

- 9am – Panania Railway Station, Panania on Weston Street side
- 9:15am – Revesby Railway Station, Revesby on Blamey Street side
- 9:30am – Padstow Railway Station, Padstow on Howard Road side

All buses depart Cronulla Beach at 3pm SHARP and return to the pick up points as above.

Bookings are not required; the program operates on a 'first come, first served' basis.