



BIRRONG BULLETIN

The Newsletter of Birrong Girls High School

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Issue No. 7

October 2017

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Dear Parents,

Secretary's School Achievement Award

On Wednesday 13 September our school was formally presented with the **Secretary's School Achievement Award for Improved Achievement and Engagement Outcomes** at the William Wilkins Gallery in Sydney.



This prestigious award recognises the significant role the school has played in improving student performance from Years 7 – 12.

The award celebrates our aspirational culture which, underpinned by a focus on professional learning, enhanced support services for students and increased

community partnerships, has delivered significant improvement in literacy and numeracy from Year 7 to Year 9, as well as outstanding student performance in the HSC.

Congratulations to our dedicated staff and students whose commitment and hard work have delivered outstanding growth in student achievement. I also acknowledge the vital role our parents play in this significant success.

Excellent NAPLAN results

In May this year all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across Australia were tested in a series of literacy and numeracy tests. The school's NAPLAN results this year have again been very pleasing.

The results for Year 7 indicate that since their test in Year 5 the girls have made good progress in literacy and numeracy. Particularly pleasing is the strong growth in writing and numeracy.

Congratulations to our Year 9 girls on their strong growth in all facets of literacy and numeracy. The results show that the growth in both literacy and numeracy since they were tested in Year 7 has far exceeded the average rate across the state.

While these results are very pleasing, there can be no room for complacency. Teachers will continue to work with students to support improvement, using NAPLAN data to tailor teaching and learning practices to better meet the

needs of all students and specifically those students not yet meeting national benchmarks.

Parents of girls in Year 7 and 9 have received the results of the NAPLAN tests for their daughter and should contact the school if they wish to discuss any aspects of their daughter's progress.

Thank you to our talented teachers and School Learning Support Officers who, along with supportive parents, have worked with our students to develop critical skills in literacy and numeracy.

HSC

On Thursday 21 September our Year 12 girls marked the end of their years at Birrong Girls at their Graduation Ceremony. This is a very special occasion on the school calendar; it marks the transformation of the bright eyed Year 7 students of 2012, into confident, independent young women ready to embrace the challenges of the future.



Year 12 Graduation Ceremony

It was an affirming and moving experience to acknowledge the achievements of our extraordinary young women as they were presented with their graduation portfolios. Thank you to the families and friends who celebrated this event, a highly significant milestone in the lives of our Year 12 students.

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Year 12 students commenced their **HSC examinations** on **Monday 16 October** with their first English paper and will sit their last examination on **Tuesday 7 November**. HSC results are published on **Thursday 14 December**. On **Wednesday 22 November**, students will return text books, sign out and collect their school reference. I look forward to celebrating the end of high school with them at their **Formal Evening on Thursday 23 November**.

On behalf of the staff and students of Birrong Girls High School, I wish the 2017 Year 12 girls all the very best in their HSC examinations, and every success for a happy and fulfilling future.

Congratulations go to...

- The newly elected **School Captain** for 2018 Eman Hamed, **Vice-Captain**, Khatera-Ahmina Latifi, **Sports Captain/Prefect**, Nadine Johnston Araujo, and the 2018 **Prefects**: Yasmin Abdelkader, Raiann Ali, Jana Chahine, Rhianna Chance, Daniella Jaber, Katherine Lieu, Stephanie Mui, Nada Salama and Monique Steel. These students have consistently displayed the values and qualities of the Birrong Girl and are exemplary role models for the rest of the student body. I look forward to supporting them and watching them grow in their new leadership role.
- Meryem Suel (Year 12) who received Rotary Vocational Youth Awards for Hospitality at Chester Hill High School on Tuesday 12 September.
- Year 10 students Fereshta Jamshidi, Asal Khalaf and April Boyer, pictured below, who were finalists in the Bankstown Youth Awards presented on Thursday 21 September. Asal was named outright winner in the Inspirational Young Person category – a fine achievement indeed!



- **The Year 11 Hospitality** students and their teachers who catered for the Year 12 Graduation Ceremony. Their fine skills and warm hospitality helped make the day a memorable and happy occasion for our Year 12 students and their parents.

P&C meeting

I extend a warm invitation to all our parents to attend the next meeting which will be held on **Wednesday 8 November at 5pm in the Common Room**. At this meeting we will acknowledge our 2017 achievements and discuss

the new School's Plan for 2018–2020. Parents are encouraged to provide their input into the school's planning processes at this meeting.

I invite you to contact the school (Tel: 9644 5057) to make an appointment with me if you have any issues that you wish to discuss about your daughter's education. Please enjoy reading about the achievements and activities of the school in the following pages.

Best wishes.

Margaret Fletcher
Principal

REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

Welcome back to Term 4, a time to work hard towards future goals.

The online 'Tell Them From Me – Partners in Learning' Parent Survey was available for all parents and carers from Monday 4 – Friday 8 September. Many thanks to those people who responded. Our response rate increased again this year with 140 parents, carers and community members providing vital feedback that will help us to strengthen the important relationship between parents and our school.

The school's website is updated regularly with videos and photographs showing the range of educational experiences in which our students participate. The calendar now includes the full range of activities on our school schedule. We urge you to visit the site often to learn more about what happens in our learning environments.

We wish all the 2017 Year 12 students the very best as they embark on their HSC examinations. These examinations bring to a close their secondary schooling and prepare them for continued success in future endeavours.

Our Year 11 students have completed their Preliminary Year examinations and they have already begun their preparation for the HSC in 2018. Students have received their reports and should spend some time reflecting on their performance and are encouraged to seek assistance from their teachers to identify how they could achieve improvement. The Year 12 Handbook has been distributed and students are encouraged to plan their term carefully, taking note of when assessment tasks are due and ensuring that they are well organised to complete all required work.

Students are reminded to adhere to school procedures for assessment tasks and examinations which are explained in the handbook. Nightly study habits and a clear focus

on completing work to develop deep understanding are essential in achieving the best possible future outcomes. It is also important that students achieve a balance between family, study and extracurricular activities. Students should get the right amount of sleep and rest, as this often impacts on the effectiveness of their study routines. If students are experiencing difficulty in maintaining a balance, or need assistance with setting goals, we encourage them to be proactive and seek help from Ms Hawk, Ms Lazarevski, Ms Salvagio or Ms Tselepi.

Throughout Term 4 Year 10 students are expected to continue working diligently, making sure they complete all class and assessment tasks to a high standard to ensure they achieve all course outcomes. Students should also be preparing for their Year 10 formal exams which will be held during Week 6. All Year 10 students have now chosen their Preliminary HSC subjects for Year 11. Some students will need to reflect on their selections and consider if their choices are best suited to their capabilities and future career aspirations. It is important that students listen to advice and make decisions which will allow them to achieve to the best of their ability. For some students, the prospect of gaining a traineeship or apprenticeship (working and undergoing training whilst being paid) may be a more appealing and appropriate pathway. Parents of Year 10 students considering an alternate pathway are encouraged to make an appointment to discuss the best options and opportunities for success post Year 10 with Ms Shinas, the school's Transition Teacher or Mr Mouzakis, Careers Adviser.

Year 9 students received their NAPLAN results in late August. These results allow parents to reflect on some areas of their daughter's progress in literacy and numeracy and allow teachers to plan to further develop literacy and numeracy skills through targeted teaching practices. NAPLAN was the first of a number of opportunities these students have to demonstrate a minimum standard of reading, writing and numeracy to receive the HSC in 2020. Some of our students did achieve the minimum standard of Band 8 but it is expected that most students across the state will demonstrate the HSC minimum standard by passing new, short online reading, writing and numeracy tests in Year 10, 11 or 12.

There are a number of excursions planned for our Year 9 students this term including the annual Science trip to Questacon in Canberra and the Luna Park Mathematics excursion. Food Technology, Geography, Commerce and Japanese students will also travel to venues outside the school to experience real-life opportunities that enhance their classroom learning.

All Year 8 students have selected their Year 9 elective subjects for 2018. These electives will continue to be studied in Year 10 2019. All students will be involved in the Year 8 VALID (Science) online testing which is scheduled at the start of Week 5 and then participate in the PDHPE swim school program at the end of Week 5.

Year 7 students also received their NAPLAN results in late August. To improve, it is vital that parents provide an environment that encourages regular reading which will assist students to improve their comprehension as well as vocabulary.

The Year 7 Field Day is fast approaching and all students are getting ready to participate in their first interschool sports gala day that fosters teamwork and sportsmanship. Later in the term, Year 7 students will attend the annual swim school where they will be instructed by qualified Austswim instructors supported by our PDHPE teachers.

Parents are reminded that the Homework Centre is available after school for students to complete work and seek assistance when they experience difficulty. It operates on Monday through Thursday and is supervised by qualified teachers from the school. This term will be a busy time studying for and completing assessment tasks, and preparing for yearly examinations. Now is the time to work especially hard to ensure that reports reflect students' efforts and capabilities.

Every day your daughter should be spending a minimum of 2 hours on her homework, assignments and revision as well as extra time for study and reading. To help students, parents should discuss their work and outwardly show interest in their learning. This could involve regularly asking them about their learning and helping them to establish a study plan to achieve their goals. Successful students always identify family support as a key element to achieving their success and acknowledge the support accordingly.

Ad Astra! Aim for your very best this term!

Ms George and Ms Cross
Deputy Principals



**BIRRONG GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL
PARENTS & CITIZENS ASSOCIATION**

Parents are invited to attend the
P & C MEETING
on **Wednesday 8 November 2017**
at **5pm in the Common Room**

HEAD TEACHER ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Contact Details - Over the year many families have changed their personal and contact details because they have moved house or obtained a new mobile phone number. It is very important that you inform the school immediately of any changes you make. There have been several incidents at school where the school has needed to contact parents in an emergency and have not had the most up to date contact numbers.

Student Attendance - To assist in the effective management of student attendance across the school, we request that you make contact with the school when your daughter is absent either by return text message or by phone **on the day they are absent**. This ensures the school knows exactly what is happening and where your daughter is on that day.

Attendance Accountability - Your daughter is required to hand in any notes or medical certificates explaining her absence from school to me if you did not reply via text or phone call. If your daughter does not supply a note as the last resort to explain her absence it will be reflected as an "unexplained absence" on her school report at the end of this year.

Early Leaver Passes - Parents who wish their daughters to leave school early for medical appointments must provide a written note including contact details, for their daughter to bring to school. This note must be presented to the Head Teacher Administration **before 8:20AM** on the day the student needs to leave early. After this time, parents will be required to come to the school and sign their daughters out at the front office.

Lateness to School - A reminder that **lessons begin at 8:30AM** at Birrong Girls High School. It is important to note that when a student is late to school, this not only affects the learning of the student that is late, but also the learning of every student in the class, as the lesson must be interrupted so the teacher can address the issue. **Students that are persistently late to school will have consequences given to them.**

Skoolbag App - We now have our own Skoolbag App to help us communicate more effectively with our school community. Skoolbag delivers school notices directly to parents and students free of charge. To install the free Birrong Girls High Skoolbag App, search for our school name on either the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. For Windows Phone, and Windows 8.1 or 10 users, search for Skoolbag in the Windows store.

The Department of Education's School Attendance Policy, which the school follows, can be viewed at the following web site: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/school-attendance-policy>

Thank you for your continued support.

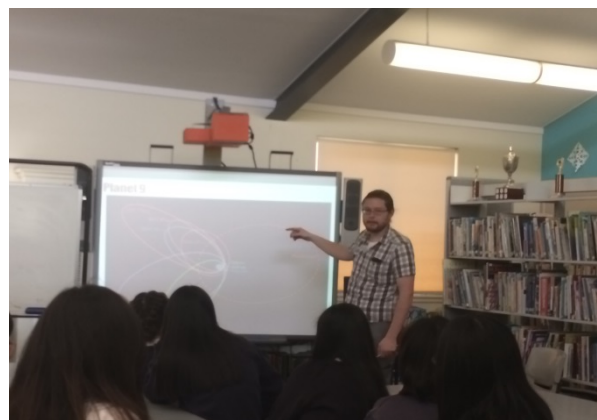
Mr Clark
Head Teacher Administration

CAREERS NEWS

The Oxford Dictionaries' definition of life states 'It is the condition that distinguishes animals and plants from inorganic matter, including the capacity for growth, activity and continual change'. In addition, 'a 15 year old today will experience a portfolio career, potentially having 17 different jobs over 5 careers in their lifetime' according to the report from the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA). These two facts have resulted in Year 12 being extremely busy over the past two months working out what they would like to do and how they can ultimately achieve this end goal.

Many discussions occurred with students over potential careers. Talks revolved around university choices as well as other pathways to these end goals. Now that this is complete it is time to place all their energy into the HSC exams.

Late last term, we had the honour of welcoming Dr Brad Tucker to Birrong Girls High School to chat to our Physics and Chemistry students. Dr Tucker is a Professor of Astrophysics from the Australian National University who combines that role with working for NASA at the Mount Stromlo Observatory. A very informative discussion ensued about the stars, planets and all things space and time.



The presentation by Dr Tucker

The Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN) is a not for profit organisation that connects businesses with students through mentoring programs. Twenty of our Year 10 students were fortunate to participate in one of their programs in which they partnered with Optus. The program was the "Interview to Impress" (i2i) where we went to Optus headquarters in Macquarie Park. This program is designed to equip students with the necessary practical skills needed to engage in employment options beyond school through the development of their interview skills. This may additionally help those students wishing to apply for university as some options have an interview component as part of the selection process.

Mr Mouzakis
Careers Adviser

JUMP ROPE FOR HEART



Birrong Girls have been a long standing supporter of the Jump Rope for Heart program, participating for over 20 years. Well done to all Year 8 students who participated in the 2017 Jump Rope for Heart Jump Off in Week 5.

The Heart Foundation is a charity dedicated to fighting the single biggest killer of Australians – heart disease. For the past 50 years, the Heart Foundation has led the charge to reduce deaths and improve the heart health of all Australians. Heart disease is a preventable disease and small changes in our everyday lives can lead to a healthier heart, such as increasing our physical activity and enjoying a balanced diet high in fresh foods. The Heart Foundation's lifesaving research and health projects are funded almost entirely by donations, such as the donations collected by Year 8 students in the lead up to their Jump Rope for Heart Jump Off.



All students participated with great enthusiasm and got involved. A huge congratulations to the Year 9 PASS students who assisted in the running of the day and displayed excellent leadership skills through their management of groups and stations.



Year 8 donations have been collected and we have successfully raised \$976! 8B was the highest fundraiser, collecting \$381. The top 3 student fundraisers were Alyaa Kutti \$100, Vivien Diep \$90 and Waniya Chowhan \$72. Well done girls!

By: PE Faculty

WRITE4FUN POETRY COMPETITION

Nadine Johnston Araujo of Year 11 submitted an original poem to a national competition called, Write4Fun, earlier this year. We congratulate her on being selected for publication. The poem was originally penned for Nadine's Drama class who were devising a group performance for International Women's Day.

A Woman Bold For Change

You beat me to the ground.
 Just so you can be crowned.
 You've started a war,
 And burned me to the core.
 I'm stuck in a cage,
 With nothing but old age.
 Yeah, I'm a woman,
 But *it's* time to make a change.
 I'm stronger than you think,
 And tougher than the colour pink.
 With a new wave,
 I won't be enslaved.
 You men, keep drinking your beer,
 Coz someday I'll be an engineer.



Nadine with Ms Andrews and the publication

Ms Andrews
Head Teacher English

AMNESTY WORKSHOPS



On 11 September, during periods 2 and 3, the Birrong Girls Amnesty members from Years 7 to 11 attended a Refugee and Women's Rights Workshop. The workshop was run by three Amnesty International members, Bani Singh, Elaine Yeo and Mon Mon, and was supervised by Ms Zomaya and Mr Sarna. We were guided through the workshop by passionate advocates for refugee and women's rights and were actively involved through questions, activities and discussions.

It was an enriching experience which fostered emotions of sympathy and gratefulness in our Amnesty members, and allowed for an insight on less fortunate people's lives and situations. We learnt about the hardships women and refugees face constantly and were informed of the many social barriers placed against women in our society today in areas of employment, education and rights. As a result of this informative workshop we were inspired to make changes on our own community.

All members were actively engaged in the workshop and were included in many activities. During the initial stages of the workshop, our Year 7-9 Amnesty members were split into three groups. Each group was given a piece of butcher's paper and a topic of controversy. We were told to create spiral maps, explaining how overlooked issues can lead to serious societal dilemmas. The spiral maps we created canvassed the inequality of women in employment, legally, in courts and medically. Our mind maps relied heavily on the five health components, these being: mental, spiritual, physical, emotional and social health and conveyed the impact of discrimination and stereotyping on women's health.

Another inclusive activity we participated in was a court role play displaying the injustices of the law towards refugees. Different situations were illustrated to us with the difficulty of communication, due to language difference, stressed. We were spoken to and made to

understand the difference between an immigrant and a refugee.

The final part of the workshop consisted of a series of videos illustrating the gender stereotypes placed on young girls, and explored how we can overcome limitations by performing small acts in our community. We were encouraged to create small groups and raise awareness of the issues we learnt about, giving students an opportunity to demonstrate initiative outside of school.

The workshop was an enriching and inspiring experience for all members of the Amnesty team as we enjoyed an interactive and educational workshop.

By: Hanin Al Khaled, Amane Alameddine and Leena Chahrouk (Year 9)

YEAR 8 MATHS ACTIVITY DAY



On 13 September, Year 8 students were lucky enough to participate in the Maths activity day. This day was jam-packed with many fun activities and games.

We began the day in the classroom competing in two challenges. We were competing in pairs to see who the ultimate mathematician was. We had a sheet that we needed to complete in 20 minutes and a visual Maths activity. Each challenge had prizes to be won for the pair who came first. After recess we commenced the day with Inquisitive Minds visiting our school with fun Maths activities planned for us. Terry was one of the members who started us off with riddles to warm us up. We soon progressed into another game of visual

problems with a block of chocolate for the pair who won. Finally, the biggest challenge of all, we answered hard questions that needed us to think outside the box. We chose a folder with a colour and received points depending on how hard it was. We were only allowed to progress to the next level if we had finished three questions from each colour. The pair with the most points won a huge block of chocolate. This was a very fun experience. To finish off the day we made geometrical gift boxes. The best box was given a few chocolates.

A big thank you to Ms Bahnam and the Maths staff for organising this amazing and fun day.

By: Talia Jbara and Lara Machlouche, Year 8

YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SEMINAR



On 14 September, Jana Chahine and I were invited to represent our school at the Young Women's Leadership Seminar at State Parliament House. We had the privilege of hearing two guest speakers, the honourable Mehreen Faruqi, a member of The Greens Party for the State Legislative Council and Trish Doyle, a member of the Australian Labour Party for the Legislative Assembly. Both these women discussed the many challenges that they have faced and continue to face as female leaders in the political arena and in the community. They both urged the audience of young leaders to challenge the stigma that women have no place in leadership positions.

Their speeches have inspired Jana and I to aim high and to remain resilient despite all the challenges that we may face and to never give up. These two women also taught us to not let fear get in the way of our passions and to never let anyone get in the way of our dreams. They challenged us to contest the poor connotations associated with being a woman in leadership and to not disregard a career in politics.

During our visit to Parliament House we also spent some time discussing the effectiveness of the parliament and leaders in addressing societal issues in small groups with other students who share the same passion about politics as Jana and I. These group discussions allowed our opinions to be heard and for us to gain another perspective about the government and leadership. We also had the opportunity to sit and witness hearings in both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council, which was another amazing opportunity. Overall this was a very enriching experience that allowed Jana and I to meet inspiring female leaders and discuss the issues

that concern us the most with like-minded students.

By: Eman Hamed, School Captain 2018

CAPA NEWS

Visual Arts Report

At the school assembly in Week 10 of last term, we celebrated the amazing work by all of our Visual Arts students who contributed to the excellent standard of art displayed at our annual CAPA Extravaganza. All students involved in the Extravaganza should be commended for their efforts and talent. In particular, the following students were awarded at the school assembly with fantastic art making packs and engraved medallions. These students were selected by the Visual Arts staff in recognition of the outstanding technical skill and conceptual strength of their artwork on display in the Extravaganza.

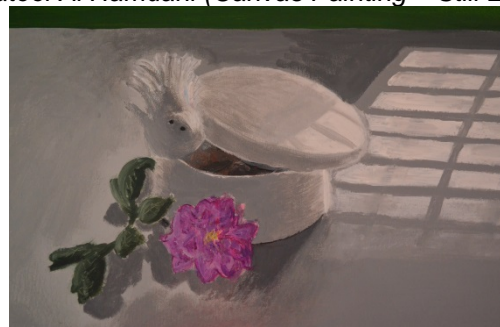
*Year 7 Visual Arts Award
Elif Simsek (Ceramic Wall Hanging)*



*Year 8 Visual Arts Award
Thuvaraka Athawan (Ceramic Mandala)*



*Year 9 Visual Arts Award
Batool Al Hamdani (Canvas Painting – Still Life)*



*Year 10 Visual Arts Award
Ayat Alfahad (Canvas Painting - Appropriation)*



*People's Choice Award
Hajer Al Sukaini (Canvas Paintings –
Body of Work)*



*Year 11 Visual Arts Award
Adlinna Samsi (Drawing on Paper – Land)*



*Year 12 Visual Arts Award
Rosol Al Helfi (Drawings on Paper -
Body of Work)*



*Photo Digital Media Award
Nadine Johnston Araujo (Digital Photography –
My Backyard)*



We also recognised the students who were mentioned in the previous Birrong Bulletin as being finalists in this year's Operation Art Awards. The Year 9 students Kaye Hafda, Laiba Chowhan and Erika Vorn were presented with certificates of recognition from the Operation Art and Westmead Children's Hospital initiative. The Year 7 students whose wonderful portraits were selected for submission to the Young Archie Awards were also presented with certificates of recognition from the Art Gallery of NSW. These students should all be congratulated for their creative endeavours.

The Year 9 elective Visual Arts classes have recently completed their unit on Totems and have created some impressive and large scale ceramic totems. These will be on display in the foyer of the Ross McBride Art Centre (Visual Arts block) in the coming weeks and open for students during lunch hours to come and view these fabulous works. Stay tuned to the student notices for the announcement of the viewing times for the Totem exhibition.

Music Report



Karaoke Friday is a fantastic opportunity for students to develop their singing and performing skills in a relaxed and supportive setting. Students can come down to the music room at lunchtime to sing along to their favourite tunes and experience using the microphone on stage. Students can sing individually or in small groups with their friends and the lyrics are always there for when the words are forgotten. Karaoke Fridays are open to all to share their talents or to work on developing them. The next Karaoke Friday is on in Week 4 down in the music rooms!

By: CAPA Faculty

HOT BOX RAFFLE

Ms Fletcher drew the Hot Box raffle for good readers on assembly on 19 September.

The lucky winners won book vouchers and cupcakes.

Mr Davidson gave a speech on the importance of returning to our favourite books.



Mr Davidson with the Hot Box raffle prizes

FAREWELL TO MS FEDES



The time has come to say farewell to Litsa Fedes who is taking up a position at Bankstown Senior College as Head Teacher HSIE on Monday 23 October.

Ms Fedes has contributed to the life of the school in many capacities: as an outstanding teacher; a caring Year Adviser, a highly organised VET coordinator and more recently as the leader of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

We take this opportunity to thank Ms Fedes for her dedication and commitment over a successful career of 31 years at Birrong Girls High School. We wish her every success in both her new position and for her future happiness.

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

October/November:

- Wednesday, 25th ▪ Year 7 Field Day
- Thursday, 26th ▪ Year 7 Vaccinations #2
- Monday, 30th October to ▪ Year 11/12 Hospitality Workplacement
Friday, 10th November

November:

- Tuesday, 7th ▪ Last day of HSC exams
- Tuesday, 7th ▪ Year 8 VALID Testing
- Wednesday, 8th ▪ Year 8 VALID Testing catch up
- Wednesday, 8th ▪ P&C Meeting, Common Room, 5pm
- Thursday, 9th to ▪ Year 8 Swim School
Friday, 10th
- Monday, 13th to ▪ Year 10 Yearly Exams
Wednesday, 15th
- Friday, 17th ▪ Year 11 Crossroads
- Wednesday, 22nd ▪ Year 12 sign-out, 8:30am – 10:30am only
- Thursday, 23rd ▪ Year 12 Formal

November/December:

- Monday, 27th November to ▪ Year 10 Work Experience
Friday, 1st December