



From the Head of Junior School

8th April 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been quite a term! We have worked through some challenges including wild weather and the seemingly ever-present COVID-19. I am immensely proud of the way that staff and students have managed – embracing the weather with a wet and muddy “Water Inquiry Day”, and with resilience and adaptability when learning has had to happen at home. Everybody certainly deserves a restful break over the April holidays.

Co-curricular

Our students have so many opportunities to grow and express themselves at Blue Mountains Grammar School! Despite interruptions in the term, we have had students represent the school at the HICES carnival for swimming, and at CIS level. Mrs Spohr’s debating team have been off to a strong start and Dr Drew’s “Kids Lit Quiz” are having fun preparing for competition. Added to these are after school Cooking Club and lunchtime clubs for STEAM, French, Sustainability, Board Games and Lovers of Books. There are musical groups for Choir, Orchestra and our Junior School Musical “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat”. It’s wonderful to witness the dedication of staff who are committed to giving our students so many areas to express themselves and to discover their passions and talents.

Staffing

I would like to thank Mrs Catherine Ratcliff and Mrs Gaye Verhoeven for their teaching of PE in Term 1. As Mrs Harris returns to school and her Sports Coordinating role, Mr Quilter will be teaching PE in the Junior School from Term 2. The children will have a great time with him and he looks forward to teaching on both Junior School campuses.

Mrs Verhoeven will spend time in our Libraries for the rest of the year. She will be busy promoting reading and working with teachers to plan research lessons to support Science, History and Geography. Mrs Ratcliff will be teaching Pre Kindergarten at Springwood for 4 days a week, with growth meaning that the Rainbow Fish may now attend Mondays – Thursdays.

Staff and students in the Junior School cannot say enough wonderful things to describe the amazing term that the Stage 1 Dolphins have had with Dr Elissa Drew. She stepped in to take this class for the term and has made a lasting impact. Her care, nurturing and incredible teaching of this group of students has been outstanding. We wish her well as she continues to casual teach and volunteer as a parent in our school community.

I am pleased to announce that we have appointed Katie Walters as a Junior School teacher, and she will take on the teaching of the Stage 1 Dolphins for the rest of the year. Katie has already connected with these students as she has worked at our school casually this term. She is excited about continuing the learning journey these students are on and nurturing them as they grow and learn. We are excited about all that Ms Walters will bring to the Junior School in the coming years.

Winter Uniform

Please note that students are to return in Winter Uniform in Term 2. This will be my first winter in the Upper Mountains and I will be getting prepared too! Parents are encouraged to check blazers irregularly worn since last Winter still fit, and to prepare uniforms for colder weather. In the colder months, especially in Wentworth Falls, morning and evening temperatures can be well below zero, and students are welcome to wear their School jumpers, blazers, all-weather jackets, school scarves, gloves and beanies. Please note that non-uniform items like puffer jackets, can’t be worn at school. The teachers and I appreciate your support in this area.

NAPLAN – Term 2

Between May 11 and May 19 2022, Years 3 and Years 5 will participate in NAPLAN testing. Students will complete standardised assessments for Writing, Reading, Language Conventions (Spelling and Grammar) and Numeracy. Students have had an opportunity to “have a go” and practise to see what this assessment is like – apart from Year 3 Writing, the assessment is now all on-line and we want to make sure that the children are familiar with the technology.



At school, Years 3 and Years 5 will continue with their learning, right up to NAPLAN. Teachers know that NAPLAN provides some helpful data, and we use this, along with many other assessments to help with planning across the Junior School. Some parents may wish to have a closer look at NAPLAN-style questions and the test format with their children at home. The link below may be a helpful resource:

<https://www.nap.edu.au/online-assessment/public-demonstration-site>

End of Day Pick up

May I please remind parents to keep a very close eye on children as they cross roads and carparks, especially at Wentworth Falls. Our pick up is busy in the afternoons and some children still seem to have boundless energy! A reminder that left over student energy unfortunately can't be spent climbing the trees at the front of the school. Thank you to the parents who are keeping an eye on this and making enthusiastic children keep their feet on the ground.

Easter Wishes

It has been special celebrating Easter with the Junior School students this term. I pray that the Easter holidays provide time for rest and reflection to the whole school community.

Yours Sincerely,

Rachael J Newton

Deputy Headmaster - Head of Junior School