



From the Head of Junior School

24th June 2022

End of Term 2 Letter

Term 2 has been an incredibly busy term. Our Junior School calendar has been full to the brim of activities and challenges to delight our students and teachers. Our term started off with NAPLAN, which for both Year 3 and Year 5 was the first experience of this kind of testing. I was enormously impressed with how the students took a balanced approach – doing their best, but remembering that a handful of assessments on a handful of days just give us part of the picture about how they are going. Our staff managed the experience well too – despite the odd technical challenge, and most people being new to this format.

Our wide range of co-curricular options have continued this term. Our Kids Lit Quiz team, coached by Dr Drew, won their division and are off to Nationals! Our debating team have been highly successful and learned so much in their debates. Some Stage 3 students are enjoying Chess Club with some wonderful Senior School volunteers, and Mrs Fox's Book Club have taken over the Library and are running competitions and recommending books, and helping to keep things in order for us all. We have student-led computer club and Mr Carr's sustainability club has been doing a great job with gardens and the Return and Earn incentive. Gardening, French, STEAM and Games clubs run at lunchtimes too across both campuses, and the after-school cooking clubs organised by Mrs Mackin and Ms Boyd are a great opportunity to learn (and eat!).

Our greatest achievement this term was certainly the Junior School musical. This was a whole school musical so every child had the opportunity to learn songs and choreography and be involved. The ensemble and lead casts were incredible, taking on the making of sets and costumes as well as learning all the script, songs and action on the stage. These opportunities don't happen without a dedicated team of staff, parents and students. Thank you again to everyone who was involved, particularly Mr Forbes and Mrs Cooney for their hard work.

Learning across the Junior School

This term, a great deal of exciting learning has happened across the Junior School. Our Pre K students at Wentworth Falls have partaken in "30 Days Wild" with a focus on outdoor learning and nature. Their experiences have included lots of time in the bush on the corner of our property (named "Sticktopia" by Stage 1 students), an excursion to learn about local waterways, nature art, cooking, shelter building and lots and lots of play. Students across the whole Junior School have been on a number of excursions, carefully designed by staff to enhance the learning happening at school. The Discovery class have embarked on an inquiry into people who have overcome adversity to make their own discoveries, and we look forward to seeing their learning at a "Night of Discovery" in Term 3.

Mr Carr has been working with STRETCH Maths students in Stage 3, and in his own class to undertake projects of inquiry in Mathematics. Student projects will be entered into a national Mathematics competition and all students are excited about being involved. Project based learning shines in STEAM and our teachers love working with Mr Bonser on the amazing projects dreamed up – creating beeswax wraps, weaving with wool and natural fibres, creating astronaut helmets and building with Lego robotics – and coding them so they move – are just some of the projects undertaken this term.

Of course, great learning will continue into next term with students working hard to develop skills and understanding in Literacy and Numeracy. Remember, these skills don't happen on their own! Teachers carefully and explicitly build on the developmental skills in these areas and the students work hard to listen to feedback and apply it, so that bit by bit (for Kindergarten – letter by letter) it all comes together to open up the whole world of learning! Junior School teachers count it a privilege to help children on their learning journey and are already working hard on programming for the second half of the year.

Community Events

We look forward to more opportunities to be together in the second half of the term. Our excellent Parents and Friends Association will be working hard to create events that children and families will enjoy. The aim of the P and F is to build a sense of community and to raise funds to create the best school possible for our students. Their support is greatly appreciated by the staff and executive.



Mr Coote is keen to get to know as many Junior School families as possible. We will soon be sending out information about when you can come to listen to him talk about his passion for education and the plan going forward for 2022 and beyond, and get to know him over a cuppa. We look forward to seeing lots of parents at both Springwood campus and at Wentworth Falls.

Ongoing COVID-19 Precautions

Our society, and indeed our school, continue to live with the challenge of COVID-19. We have navigated the ups and downs of staff and student absences and thankfully our school community have generally been quite well. I recommend the School's COVID-19 Guidelines to your reading, and draw your attention to the following specific points:

- If you are experiencing even the mildest cold and flu symptoms, please remain home and be tested. Students demonstrating cold and flu symptoms will be immediately isolated in Sickbay and sent home.
- Please continue to practice good hand-hygiene. Throughout Term 3 students will continue to be asked to sanitise their hands and we are very happy for students to wear masks, especially in those classes where cases are active.
- Remember that our Pre K – Year 2 students who are household contacts need to be kept at home. Students in this age bracket generally find effective mask wearing very difficult, and social distancing is a concept that is quite foreign to them! Our older students who are household contacts (testing negative with no symptoms) and who CAN effectively wear masks and practise social distancing can attend school while being a household contact.

Icebreakers Invitation

Parents of Pre-Kindergarten students, and **all new parents** to the BMGS Junior School (Wentworth Falls and Springwood campuses) are cordially invited to our annual Icebreakers Evening, to be held on Friday 22nd July (Friday Week 1), at 7:00pm. This long-running annual event was postponed from the beginning of Term 1 due to COVID-safety considerations, and we are pleased to welcome all our new parents and families to the School on behalf of the Executive Team, Staff, and Parents and Friends Association. [Please click here to RSVP.](#)

Final Greetings

I sincerely hope that your winter holiday break is restful and that you find time to refresh as families. I will be having a marvellous time on the "Vic Trip" with Mr Coote, Mrs Gerrard, Miss Smyth and a large group of excited children! We'll rest after that, and see you safe and well for Term 3.

Yours Sincerely,

Rachael J Newton
Head of Junior School