



## From the Assistant Principal – Head of Junior School

### End of Term 2 Letter, 2023

We have made it to the end of another busy term.

#### Staffing Changes

Miss Briana Wadeisha has been an Educator in the Junior School for the past year. Her cheery nature and care for the children have been greatly appreciated. She is moving on to different work, while she continues to study towards her degree in Inclusive Education. We wish her all the best in her new role. Mrs Ariane St James, who is our OOSHC Coordinator, will be filling in for two days a week in the Educator role and I know she will be fabulous in supporting staff and students in this vital work.

#### Learning Across the Junior School

Despite a busy term with excursions and events such as the Commissioning and Shrek Jnr, our classes have been busy with lots and lots of learning! Pre-Kindergarten children are now very much at home in our school environment. They are comfortable with routines and with the different staff on each campus. As always, they are especially cherished by our 'big kids' and love to greet all students. Our Kindergarten children are at that point in their Literacy journey where things are starting to 'snowball' and all the pieces of the puzzle are coming together. It's exciting to visit these classrooms and see how our smallest students are curious and excited about learning.

Our Stage 1 students at Wentworth Falls and Springwood are both lively bunches! Years 1 and 2 are vitally important years, where students start to think more abstractly and conceptually and where the curriculum demands do step up. I love that our Stage 1 teachers lead the students through this almost seamlessly, ensuring that the learning is still hands on, fun and exploratory. I've enjoyed teaching Drama to these children and watch their imaginations soar!

Stage 2 students are really beginning to tackle big ideas and big problems that require hopeful solutions. Mr Carr's class have been awarded a Landcare Grant, which they are using for their inquiry project focused on creating frog habitats in 'Sticktopia', the bush area at the bottom of our playground. This inquiry covers learning in Maths, English, Science and Geography and our children are passionate about making a difference in the environment.

Mrs Gerrard's class are getting their thumbs dirty too. Their inquiry project has involved a revival of the school vegetable garden, with work in STEAM and Mathematics to solve issues in watering and drainage. This class have also become business people, selling their produce to eager customers at pick up time. Next term, Stage 2 Gudugulung will be working with Council and Sydney Water to investigate the needs of the local creek behind the school and I look forward to hearing about what they learn.

Our Stage 3 classes have been busy too. These classes really focus on their skills to be both independent inquirers and collaborative members of teams. We know these skills will help them transition to Senior School and beyond. Both classes have passionately thrown themselves into learning about Asia. All students have been given agency over which country they would like to focus on and how they will communicate their learning. Projects range from dioramas focusing on geographical features, travel plans and itineraries (costed and timed for learning in Maths!), traditional costume making and sewing, music compositions and more. Mrs Spohr and Mr Forbes work closely on these activities, with Mr Bonser and other specialists to give students time to think, research, create, refine and present their learning.



## Wellbeing in the Junior School

Our focus on well being has continued this term, particularly in assembly time. It's wonderful to have more and more parents visiting our assemblies and hearing from the children on these topics. This term we have focussed on 'The Ingredients of Play' and learned valuable lessons in topics such as defining rules, resilience, being assertive, compromise, winning and losing graciously and much more. It's wonderful to be able to then transfer this talk to issues that arise in the playground.

Next term, our assemblies will dive deeply into the topic of Kindness. This value is at the heart of how we treat others and the Year 5 students who attended the Children's Kindness Convention and our Wellbeing team will help drive our assemblies at Wentworth Falls. Mrs Mackin will be coordinating assemblies at Springwood and I know that the children there will be delighted with the learning and focus there too.

## Thank you

I'd like to again thank all of our staff for their commitment to our Junior School musical Shrek Jnr. The show was amazing, but this is only down to the dedication of the staff who spent literally hundreds of hours with students, or in planning, for the show. The dedication of Mrs Cooney and Mr Forbes in particular is outstanding. Other staff, like Ms Malliate and Mrs Arrell were at many Sunday rehearsals and the show couldn't run without them. To all the other volunteers, including Mr Velasko, Lachlan Burgess and Ms Jane Miscovic-Wheatly and her team of awesome parent helpers - thank you very much. Our students learned so much and had a completely joyful and rewarding experience by being part of the show!

## Final Greetings

Thank you for another term of partnership with us here in the Junior School. Staff and parents are a team and when we work together with good communication and understanding, our children achieve great things. Take time out to rest these holidays and I look forward to seeing you next term.

Yours Sincerely,

Rachael J Newton  
Assistant Principal - Head of Junior School