



Pittwater House

From the Heads of College and Grammar

January 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to 2020. We welcome all members of our School community to another exciting year.

The start of the school year is always a moment of great anticipation and excitement. For everyone, students, parents, and teachers alike, there is that wonderful sense of a new beginning and a fresh start. It is natural for students to have a bit of anxiety and maybe even a few questions – what will my teacher(s) be like, who will be in my class, etc. But the focus should always be on the new upcoming adventure of learning and growing.

The Pittwater House community, where home and school come together, make a tremendous partnership and the beneficiary of all the care, challenge and support, nurturing and mentoring, is ultimately your child.

To make it all go smoothly, there are a number of things that parents do to make this educational experience be as positive, productive, and worthwhile as possible. There has never been a more exciting time to be in education or to attend school.

Our students will live and work in a world that will depend on their readiness to assess new ideas and adapt to change with confidence. Therefore, we aim to give all of our students strategies that will assist them in life and in their academic endeavours to help prepare them for a world that is changing rapidly.

Academic

Students should utilise the enthusiasm that is usually associated with the beginning of the new school year to plan their study habits, establish routines and develop sound work practices. Close reference to the student assessment guidelines will assist in this planning. These will be distributed in Week 1.

There is no doubt that the home environment plays a crucial role in setting the tone and inspiring outcomes. Whilst we are not suggesting for one moment that parents should be the ones who make decisions around organisation of study routines, careful encouragement regarding time management and spatial requirements usually help to establish good customs. A desk or workspace away from other distractions (including social media and devices not related to work) and consistency in meal times, sleep and other family routines helps considerably.

We hope all students use these first weeks to reflect on previous work habits and look for ways to improve their approach. We feel strongly that if we can set a good approach now, it will help students to cope better in the coming weeks and months, when work demands inevitably build. During the school year students will receive instruction and support from subject teachers and in Form time relating to the development of study and examination skills.

If students are struggling with organisational skills or any areas in their courses we ask that they are encouraged to talk to their teachers and school leaders. All the staff are keen to support and assist their students. We also ask that parents encourage students not to multi task but rather to be focused on their work. Completing homework whilst utilising social media is not effective.

Partnership

The academic success and pastoral care of our students is always at the forefront of our thinking. All of our staff are concerned with the total wellbeing and achievement of each student. People are very important at Pittwater House and we are committed to providing a safe environment where students are aware and respectful of others.

Student academic achievement and pastoral care is most effective when there is a strong partnership between home and school.

Clear two-way communication, reminders and reinforcement (at home and at school) of strategies to support progress, and early intervention in identifying and addressing problems are vital to the effective exercise of pastoral care.

Our Year Level Coordinators will work closely with the staff, Form teachers, parents and the Heads of School. Parents are strongly encouraged to use all of these highly experienced and effective members of staff and to specifically contact your daughter's or son's Form teacher as a first point of contact should queries or concerns arise.

It is so important that we work together, as a team, for the benefit of our students. As part of the School Academic and Pastoral Program we will continue to run informative sessions for parents and where appropriate students of the various age groups and genders about coping with stress, organisation techniques, leadership, self-identity, being part of a group and peer pressure. We also have presentations on problems associated with alcohol abuse and risky behaviour, Cyber Bullying and Bullying.

An important part of our care and support of our student community comes from our senior students. We value the contribution they make to the community as peers and leaders. The Big Bro Program and the College Union Groups has a valuable and significant effect on the contribution and nurture given and received across both the College and Grammar schools. As leaders, our students gain a real sense of their contribution to the School and the wider community.

Pastoral Programs

The Pastoral Programs at Pittwater House focus on cultivating an environment and culture that supports the holistic development of wellbeing and growth in the physical, social, intellectual and emotional aspects of individuals and across our wider School Family. It also identifies that there is a need to recognise particular gender requirements at varying times as our students mature and grow older. We recognise that effective academic learning within a school context cannot be separated from the exercise of effective pastoral care and development. Therefore, a commitment to excellence in academic performance must be accompanied by a commitment to excellence in physical health, social competence and emotional resilience and flexibility, as well as a 'growth mindset'. Our pastoral care includes proactive elements – such as developing skills that build resilience, recognising strengths, promoting a school culture that emphasises respect and empathy, teamwork and participation. We want all our students to feel that they can strive for personal success and growth in a safe environment. This year we will introduce some new Programs for Year 7 - 11. We are very aware of the impact social media has on young people. Several Programs are in place to support all our students but we ask if a student is concerned about any aspect of social media please let us know immediately.

Programs and Community

All Year 7 to 11 Forms will participate on an Outdoor Education Camp during the year. Each Camp program is designed to challenge the students through activities aimed at building teamwork, initiative and leadership skills.

The Year 11 Camp has the added aim of getting the students off to a good start in the Preliminary and HSC studies. It is important that our students gain study skill advice and develop strategies to assist them with organisation. Key note speakers will talk to the students about their experiences, organisation and study tips. The Camp will also include team building activities. The Camp is specifically held at the start of Year 11 to assist our students prepare for the challenges of the Preliminary and HSC courses. It is important that everyone is given strategies to help them flourish through Stage 6 of their education.

Week 1 Reminders

Orientation Day – Wednesday 29 January at 9.00am in the Hall for all Year 7 students and all students new to the school in Years 8 to 12. Students should meet at the Hall, where they will be signed in before meeting staff, Prefects and commencing an Orientation Program. **Students should bring their laptops on this day.** The Year 7 Program will run until midday and the Year 8-12 Program will run until 10.00am when they can be collected. Students are asked to attend in school uniform.

First Day of Term - The whole school first day of term is Thursday 30 January. All students will begin with a Period 1 Form class, where students will be allocated lockers, meet their Form Teacher and be given timetables. Signs will be posted at either entrance indicating Form Class locations. These details are also available to parents by viewing student timetables via Edumate.

There will be an Opening of Term 1 Assembly for all students, where the Principal will address the School.

We ask all students to be aware of the lesson times as it is important that students arrive at class on time. The School works on a ten day timetable. A copy of the bell times and term dates appears in the student diary and student handbook.

Uniform

We would kindly ask your support in ensuring that your child meets and understands the high standards Pittwater House expects its student to demonstrate, not only in behaviour, but also in uniform and personal presentation. Could we take this opportunity to remind students that piercings are not acceptable. With the exception of being allowed to wear either one small stud or sleeper in the lower ear lobe, jewellery is not to be worn to school. Make up must not be worn to school and hair should be tied back. All College students must ensure their dresses are an appropriate length. All Grammar students are expected to be clean shaven. Shirts should be tucked in when in class, arriving or departing school, with ties worn over the top button of the shirt, which should be buttoned. Grammar students should have a belt for their pants and when wearing shorts, long socks should be pulled up. The beginning of a new year is a good time and opportunity to set or re-affirm these standards at both home and at school. Please consult the uniform guidelines contained in the student handbook where uniform rules are noted.

In general terms, blazers should be worn the year round and to all school functions, unless otherwise specified by the Principal. Periods of exemption are usually granted during the warmer parts of the year. In Term 1, blazers are needed for the School Photographs.

Hats are mandatory for all students and are to be worn during recess and lunch, outdoor PE classes and School excursions. College girls in the Senior School are permitted to wear the blue straw school hat and while this is not compulsory, it is a smart and sun safe part of the uniform.

Any students with inappropriate skirt lengths and hairstyles, or hair that needs a trim, will not be able to access classes until this has been rectified.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L. Probst', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ms Lorna Probst
Head of College

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Heath', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr David Heath
Head of Grammar