

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to our final newsletter for Semester 1. I will take this opportunity to reflect on some of the key happenings from the first half of the year as well as look forward to initiatives for Semester 2. I will do this as follows:

Staffing

Our Principal, Mr More is still on leave and it is unlikely he will return this year. In that case, I will remain, Acting Principal, Carole Baker will remain Acting Deputy Principal and Leanne Bell will remain Acting Head of Department (HOD) English.

Sue Davidson returns from LSL after four weeks next Term. Sam Roestenburg from Cairns High has been doing an excellent job in Sue's absence and will stay until Sue returns.

Rob Callin (Science) and Jake Hancock (Arts) will remain Acting HODs till the end of the year.

Sharyn Crookes is taking maternity leave from the holidays, so we will be appointing an Acting HOD Maths until the end of the year. Applications for this position are in and a decision will be made by Friday 19 June.

Mark Jones, our HOD ICT/Business has recently taken ill and may also be absent for some period of Semester 2. We wish Mark a speedy recovery. Carmel Reddan is Acting HOD until the end of semester. We will appoint a HOD for Semester 2 if required.

As is usual, there are a number of other staff taking leave for shorter periods next semester.

With all the acting positions, and with the amount of leave being taken, I wish to take this opportunity to stress to you all that the school is in great hands and we are very

conscious of maintaining high quality teaching and learning across all our subjects. The maintenance of a stable positive teaching and learning environment is highest priority for me. You have my assurance we will do all we can to ensure this remains.

Facilities

Work will commence on our front of school enhancement project before the holidays, as will exterior painting of Admin and L Blocks. We are changing the colour scheme of the buildings to navy blue, white and burnt orange. These colours come from our floral emblem - the strelitzia flower - and will become our official school colours. Work on projects around the library and an undercover learning area in L Block are also progressing.

Learning Outcomes

It may seem strange to emphasise this, but high level learning outcomes for all our students is the prime focus of our energies across the school this year.

Staff are currently engaged in professional learning to enable them to continually develop their skills as teachers. Our teaching and learning framework - The Dimensions of Learning - is becoming an accepted framework around which we teach and reflect on practice. I would encourage parents and carers to google "Dimensions of Learning" if you are interested in reading more about this.

High expectations of our students is also a key focus for the year. All students are expected to fulfil their responsibilities as learners and we, as a school, are committed to raising the bar in this area. High school is an opportunity not to be wasted and as Principal, I am committed to addressing areas where students are not meeting their "end of the bargain".

I am currently working with student leaders to seek their input on a range of student expectations, all of

which can impact on school image, school culture and ultimately learning. Once I have gone through this with students, I will re-issue our expectation on these. Areas I am canvassing include:

- ◆ verbal abuse/insolence - student to teacher - quite simply this is not acceptable and will not be tolerated at Smithfield High
- ◆ bringing all learning materials to school - again, not negotiable
- ◆ jewellery and body piercings - I will review our expectations here. I want students to see school as a work environment and as such we have expectations on appearance
- ◆ Uniform - as above and also WPH&S requirements
- ◆ iPods/Mobile Phones - our policy on electronic devices is clear but still many students abuse this privilege. I will be moving to a 'loss of privilege' response to individuals who do not follow policy.

Ultimately, the school climate we want is one where students can use their leisure time in a manner appreciative of the world they are growing up in.

AND, (most important!) where learning is not compromised. That is - teachers can teach and students can learn. Students who interfere with this need to meet the expectations. This is not negotiable.

Having gone through the above, I must acknowledge that the vast majority of our students do meet their expectations. Smithfield students are great kids and together we can continue to make sure they get a great education.

School Vision

A good time to reflect on how we are progressing in developing Smithfield as a high performing academic school. By this we want a school in which all students can achieve to a high level.

Principal's Column continued...

All our school faculties/programs are reconnecting with this vision so that our courses/subject offerings best allow students to achieve high level outcomes.

We are also now closely monitoring individual progress (particularly in the Senior years at the moment) so that students and parents know explicitly how individuals are progressing in each subject they study. This closer scrutiny of individual progress will become more prevalent right across the school.

Extra-Curricular News

So much is going on. If you were able to catch Cycas Circus at the Tanks this month you would have seen an amazingly great show.

Performing Arts evenings have been postponed until next term and are a wonderful evening's entertainment. Check for new dates!

Athletics Carnival, Year 11 Camp and QCS tests are all coming up next term also.

Finally, can I thank all students, parents and staff for their efforts this term. The recent Swine Flu outbreak has added an extra layer of complexity to our school routines and this has been managed well. A special thank you to Judy Andersen for her diligence here.

To all, have a happy and safe June—July holiday. I look forward with passion and commitment to next semester.

Till next newsletter,
Regards
Barry Courtney
Acting Principal



STUDENT FREE DAY - Thursday 16 July 2009

We have received permission to have our floating student free day (ministerial holiday) on Thursday 16 July 2009.

Don't forget Monday 13 July is also the state wide student free day.

Reports

Report cards for Semester 1 will be posted to parents/carers on 24 July, as assessment runs right up to final day of this semester.

Parent-Teacher Interviews take place on 4 August.

Phone Numbers

We would appreciate it if you could ensure that we have your correct phone (mobile) numbers.

During the recent Swine Flu instance text messages needed to be sent to these mobile phone number and are also used to inform parents of important events.

Late Arrivals

It's happening again - students arriving late because they were "waiting for the rain to stop". Surely, living in the tropics as we are, families should be prepared for days and days of continuous rain with raincoats, jackets, umbrellas, etc. So in the event of unseasonal rain there should be appropriate wet weather gear handy for students to use. Please ensure your children have access to this clothing when it rains.

Spray Jackets are compulsory for winter uniform - no other jumpers will be accepted. The cost of the spray jackets has increased to \$45.00 each. Due to the financial constraints we are unable to keep a range of stock—get your orders in now for the winter season. You are able to lay-by the school jackets if you wish, just see the Tuckshop ladies.

Out of School Incidents

There have been a few reports recently relating to student behaviour on the way to and from school. The Education Act was changed a couple of years ago giving authority to schools to deal with some incidents that occur out of school hours.

If a child can be identified as a student of this school by wearing their school uniform, or if they are tracked directly to or from school, then they can be held accountable to the school for their actions.

This does not in any way absolve parents of their responsibility but it does give the school the capacity to deal with incidents of bullying or other inappropriate behaviour that may bring the school into disrepute.

Vehicles on School Grounds

A reminder to all parents that vehicles are not to enter the school grounds unless on authorised business.

Staff who work here are authorised, as are delivery vehicles and trades people who are working at the school.

Dropping off or picking up children is not included in authorised activities. If an accident was to occur, the driver of an unauthorised vehicle may not be covered by insurance and the school would not accept any liability. In the event of a child being injured the costs could be significant.

So next time you think you can save a couple of minutes by driving into the school to drop off/pick up your child, just take a few seconds to contemplate the risks.

Your support in this matter is appreciated.