



# BLUE MOUNTAINS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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## 2019 End of Term 2 Letter - Junior School

Dear Families of the Junior School

I trust Term 2 has been a positive one for you and that you enjoy a well-earned, restful break in the upcoming school holidays. There is much to celebrate in terms of student activity from this term. Most recently we have been treated to a wonderful School production of *The Wizard of Oz* and a number of the cast members treated the wider community to an abridged version of the musical by performing at last Saturday's Winter Magic Festival in Katoomba. Our Chess teams have experienced great success while hosting the Heads of Independent Co-Educational Schools (HICES) Chess Tournament and the NSW Junior Chess League Blue Mountains Tournament, both of which were won by our A team. Our keen footballers from Stage 3 enjoyed competing in the Western Sydney Wanderers Gala Day, with our girls reaching the semi-finals and our boys A team going on to win the competition and progress to regional finals later this year. Our HICES Debating team have also been a force to be reckoned with, as they honed their oratorical skills over a series of debates in the Western Region, finishing in equal first place but unfortunately being eliminated on the count back rule. Our Cross Country team ran with determination and vigour at the HICES Carnival finishing in 2nd place in Division 2 and winning the Percentage Shield. Two runners went on to represent HICES at the Combined Independent Schools (CIS) Carnival, and we were delighted that we also had two boys selected for the CIS Hockey team who competed in the Primary Schools Sports Association (PSSA) Championships and finished runners-up.

Classes have enjoyed enriching excursions including an Autumn Walk for Early Learning, a journey back in time for Stage 2 with our archivist Mrs Plummer in Coorah, a visit to the CARES Bike Safety Centre and a chance to participate as scientists to uncover the health of our local waterways at the Blue Mountains City Council Bioblitz. 5B enjoyed a visit to the Bathurst Goldfields and 5/6F indulged their love for Star Wars with a visit to the Powerhouse Museum for the Star Wars: Identities exhibition. Opera Australia came to visit with their rendition of *By the Light of the Moon*. Stage 1 enjoyed building scarecrows with our visitors from Greystanes, winning a prize for them at the Leura Harvest Festival, and our Public Speaking Showcase was held to share the talents of our finest orators from Years 3 to 6. All the while, our children experience the daily challenge of fostering deep and higher order thinking skills, wondering and making connections as they engage with the curriculum under the expert facilitation of their teachers.

Co-curricular opportunities from Term 2 included Home Learning Club, Board Games for Early Learning, Stage 2 STEAM Club, Chess and Debating. Whilst Chess continues into Term 3, STEAM Club moves to Stage 1 and Stage 3, and the opportunity of rugby clinics with NSW Rugby presents itself on Monday afternoons. Calligraphy Club will start up for our older students, whilst Early Learning children may like to join the Sewing and Needlecraft Club. Early Learning Choir has had a successful move to Thursday before school and continues into Term 3. Choir and orchestra are looking forward to the IPSHA Performing Arts Festival in August and Mrs Cooney and Mrs Lewis are always keen to welcome new members to their choirs and to orchestra. Our Tournament of Minds team will be preparing for the regional competition also in August, and our Athletics team is looking forward to competing in the Western Associated Schools (WAS) and HICES Carnivals later next term. There will be Book Week and Science Week celebrations, our French-themed bicycle race *Tour de Montagnes Bleues*, a visit from Life Education, as well as a week long Stage 3 Victorian Tour and the eagerly anticipated Stage 3 Tour of Canberra.



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## **Vacation Care and Code Camp**

During the upcoming holidays we are launching our new Vacation Care program, for students from both our Preparatory and Junior School campuses. The program will be operated on our Wentworth Falls campus with transport from the Valley Heights campus for the first week (Monday 1 July – Friday 5 July) and for the last few days (Monday 22 July – Tuesday 23 July) of the holidays. Also here at Junior School we will be hosting a Code Camp from Monday 15 July – Tuesday 16 July for Years 3-6 students from both campuses and for external students. If you would like to avail yourselves of one of these holiday opportunities, or indeed have questions about any of the aforementioned events, please contact the School for further information.

## **Student Leadership and Wellbeing**

The School is growing consistency in the structure of student leadership between its three campuses. For the Junior School that will mean the establishment of a new Sustainability leadership team, and further discussions are in train in regards to how to enhance the leadership opportunities for all of our students.

Both our younger and older students continue to benefit from regular buddy sessions together, and the institution of the Buddy Bench in the playground has given new opportunities to expand friendships and demonstrate compassion and care for each other. Our Wellbeing leadership team, facilitated by our wonderful School Psychologist Mrs Watts, has instituted Random Acts of Kindness awards in Assembly, acknowledging students who exemplify our core value of Caring for Others. The team has also established a Putting out Problems (PoP) Mailbox which has been successful in identifying issues of concern for students. Having discussed the issues identified through the POP box, the Wellbeing team have presented these issues at Assembly and shared ideas and strategies as to how to deal with these challenges.

## **School Attire**

As the colder months have well and truly arrived, many of the children are needing to bring additional clothing to school. Please remember that School beanies are the uniform item for those who need to warm their heads, and the blazer or the School's all weather jacket needs to be the outer garment to be worn to and from school. School jumpers and Centenary fleecies are great to keep students warm during the day, but they do not replace the blazer or jacket. Similarly, Sport attire must always be uniform items also. The teachers and I appreciate your support in this matter.

## **School Crossing**

It is timely to remind families that the school crossing is a busy location at drop off and pick up time, and student safety must always be paramount in everyone's mind. Please travel slowly through this crossing area and come to a full stop if someone is waiting on the island to cross. Pedestrians need to use only the crossing and not other parts of the driveway to cross. Be patient and please avoid queuing across the crossing, moving to the front of the queue if cars ahead of you depart. Drivers must remain with their vehicle at all times, though may of course help their children load and unload. Please do not conduct conversations with others while in this zone and move to one of the parking areas if you wish to walk with or collect your children. If everyone abides by these few simple principles to keep the children safe it will be in the best interests of us all.



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## Student Led Conferences

Later in Term 3 the opportunity will be made available for parents of children from Stages 1 to 3 to join their children in a Student Led Conference. This will be an opportunity for your child to share with you some samples of his or her work maintained in a Student Portfolio. We encourage reflective learning at BMGS and as such these conferences are an opportunity for the students to reflect upon their learning, giving them greater ownership of the learning process, and acknowledge strengths and aspects of their schooling that make them proud, as well as helping them identify areas of focus and to set realistic learning goals. More information will be made available closer to the date and I hope many parents will take up this opportunity to engage with their children and their views on their own learning. For students in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, Parent Teacher Interviews will be conducted instead, and for those families with children in Stages 1 – 3, interviews may be scheduled by request. Please contact your child's class teacher if this is the case.

## School Reports

School reports have been published and can be found on the Parent Portal. Please contact Reception if you need assistance accessing the Portal and one of our expert administration team will be able to assist you. If there are any issues that you wish to discuss as a result of reading your child's report, please contact the relevant teacher to arrange a meeting once school resumes on Wednesday, 24 July.

## Dates for your Diary

Please take note of the separate list of dates for all Preparatory and Junior School Families for Term 3, and remember that the Newsletter has up to date information on all School activities. This can be accessed via the School's website on [www.bmgs.nsw.edu.au](http://www.bmgs.nsw.edu.au). There are hard copies in the School Office – you are welcome to take a copy. Where unanticipated events occur during the term we will notify you as details are confirmed.

## Salutation

As you can see from this letter, we are a busy and enriching school indeed. It is my hope that you have a restful and rejuvenating school holiday and the staff and I look forward to welcoming you back to another eventful term of learning and more in Term 3.

Enjoy the break!

**Nigel Cockington**  
Head of Junior School

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**Information from this point forward applies to all three campuses**

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## Important Whole-School Dates

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Wed 24 Jul | Start of Term 3   |
| Fri 2 Aug  | Whole School Music Concert, Cuff Hall, 6:00pm to 8:30pm                             |
| Tue 20 Aug | P&F General Meeting held at the Preparatory Campus                                  |
| Sat 24 Aug | Parents' and Friends' Association Annual Trivia Night, Cuff Hall, 6:30pm to 10:30pm |
| Fri 27 Sep | Valedictory Day   |
| Fri 27 Sep | End of Term 3   |

## Term Dates

|            |                 |
|------------|-----------------|
| Mon 14 Oct | Start of Term 4 |
| Wed 4 Dec  | End of Term 4   |

Please note that 2020 term dates can be found on the School's website

## Community Surveys

Blue Mountains Grammar is an excellent school and is committed to improvement and innovation focused on the needs of every individual in our community. To enable us to better understand the School, review and reflect on current practices, and better appraise the effectiveness of our School improvement efforts we must be committed to listening to the feedback we already receive, as well as instituting further means of collecting regular and ongoing feedback. One way we will do this is through annual School stakeholder surveys.

For this reason, I am excited to announce our School's participation in the Association of Independent Schools NSW (AISNSW) Perspectives suite of surveys. This is a school-wide industry standard survey tool intended to provide all staff, all parents and guardians, all students in Years 5-12, School leaders, and Board members with the opportunity to assist in the growth and development of our whole School community. The surveys focus on five important domains: School Environment, Teaching and Learning, Student Wellbeing, Leadership, and Community. Gathering information about these areas will be of significant benefit to us as a community to help identify our School's strengths as well as any opportunities for improvement, as we seek to ensure we are meeting the needs of all. Details about accessing the survey, data security, and confidentiality will be sent to parents by email.

I encourage every member of our community to engage with the Perspectives survey during Weeks 2 and 3 of Term 3. Should you have any questions please contact the Perspectives Liaison, Janine Hanrahan in the Coorah Office or at [perspectives@bmgs.nsw.edu.au](mailto:perspectives@bmgs.nsw.edu.au).

## Whole School Music Concert

Our students and their Music teachers have been eagerly rehearsing numerous items in preparation for the Whole School Music Concert on Friday 2 August commencing at 6:00pm. Students performing in the various ensembles have been given information pertaining to this event, and we hope that many families will be able to join us in Cuff Hall for this wonderfully entertaining evening. This concert is the children's opportunity to showcase their musicality and it is hoped that families will stay until the conclusion of the event (about 8:00pm) as a mark of respect for the student performers.



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## Parents' and Friends' Association Annual Trivia Night

Our Parents' and Friends' Association is a wonderful supporter of the School. A favourite annual event is the Trivia Night held in Cuff Hall on Saturday 24 August. The theme for the evening is Cartoons, Caricatures and Comics, so come along and dress up in theme. You may even win a prize for best dressed or best table. Get together with friends, form a table of eight, and challenge yourself to a fun night of competition and community.

## Student Leadership

Students are at the heart of our School; their insight and enthusiasm bring energy and authenticity to School life and thus the School is committed to providing them with opportunities to progressively develop skills in leadership, beginning in the Preparatory and Junior Schools and continuing into the Senior School. Through the various leadership roles made available to students we provide them with meaningful opportunities to make positive changes to their peer's lives, to School life, and to society. As such, the school is progressively developing opportunities for our students to lead student culture in activities that align with their own interests and with the School's core commitments in areas such as learning, wellbeing, and sustainability. Opportunities available at each campus will evolve over the coming years.

## Smart Devices

Smart Devices include tablets, mobile phones and smart watches, all of which are a part of modern life, and whilst there are risks associated with them, they have many potential benefits, including the improvement of communication and safety. The School is committed to providing students with a safe and highly engaging learning environment and recognises that smart devices offer great value for some educational activities and so the School wants to provide students age appropriate guidelines for their use. The School intends to partner with families to progressively teach students to use these devices responsibly as they grow. Students in the Preparatory and Junior Schools will continue to be expected to keep any smart devices in their school bags or at Student Reception.

Commencing next term, students in Years 7 and 8 will be required to keep any smart devices secured in lockers between 8:30am and 3:00pm, whilst students in Years 9 and 10 will place smart devices in tubs provided by teachers during lessons. For Year 11 and 12 students there is an expectation that they will regulate their own use of smart devices under the supervision of teachers. All students are asked not to use smart devices for entertainment during breaks. In the event a student does not follow these guidelines, their smart device will be placed in Student Reception and collected by the student at the end of the day. Repeated use outside guidelines will lead to communication with parents and carers.

## Change of Student Leave Arrangement

The School's leave procedures previously required parents to apply to the Headmaster for leave for any planned student absences. From the start of Term 3, applications are to be directed to the administrators in each School. Heads of School will approve short absences and refer extended or overseas absences (requiring a School application form) to the Headmaster for his approval and the issue of a Certificate of Extended Leave, as required by the NSW Premier. If the children are in more than one School, email to one of the administrators and they will liaise with other relevant staff. In such cases School administrators will provide approvals separately. The relevant email addresses are as follows:

prepschool@bmgns.nsw.edu.au  
juniorschool@bmgns.nsw.edu.au  
absencess@bmgns.nsw.edu.au



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## **Alumni Events**

The School organises a range of annual and periodic events for its alumni and some of these will take place in Term 3. On Saturday 17 August we will hold a 10 Year reunion for the class of 2009 and on Saturday 21 September we will host the annual Alumni Reunion Day to which all Alumni are welcome. Both of these events will be held at the Wentworth Falls campus. We encourage Alumni to stay connected to the School's Facebook page and website, where information regarding these events will be published.

## **Keep Informed**

Our primary means of communication with parents is via our newsletter, published every Friday during term time, providing parents with regular news and updates as to the happenings at School. Accessing the Parent Portal is another excellent way to keep in touch with events at the School, or to locate a required form or information letter. Please avail yourself of any or all of these methods to keep in touch, and always feel free to contact Reception with any queries.

## **Keep Us Informed**

Parents have many options by which they can communicate with the School, however if parents are unsure, or if other channels do not seem to be working, a School has introduced a new option. Parents with feedback, either positive or negative, and parents with questions, are encouraged to email us at our new email address:

[feedback@bmg.nsw.edu.au](mailto:feedback@bmg.nsw.edu.au)

This could be a commendation about our beautifully behaved students on the train, or a question about where to locate a particular form, or a complaint that you have not had a reply from the Headmaster having called the School three times. Our commitment is that once you email us through this address, our administrative team will respond during normal business hours. Of course this will require users to provide us with their name, and if we don't have contact details, a telephone number also.

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**The Term 3 School Calendar of Events follows**

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# Term 3 Dates

## Pre-K – Year 6 Families



Blue Mountains  
Grammar School

*This schedule contains important dates for students from the Preparatory (P) and Junior (J) School campuses.*

| Date          | P | J | Event   |
|---------------|---|---|---|
| M1 - F5 Jul   | Y | Y | Vacation Care at the Wentworth Falls Campus; 8:00am – 5:00pm                          |
| M15 – T16 Jul | Y | Y | Code Camp at the Wentworth Falls Campus; 8:30am – 3:30pm                              |
| M22 - T23 Jul | Y | Y | Vacation Care at the Wentworth Falls Campus; 8:00am – 5:00pm                          |
| Wed 24 Jul    | Y | Y | Term 3 commences  |
| Tue 30 Jul    |   | Y | IPSHA Performing Arts Festival Rehearsal, Ascham School Edgecliff; 8:00am – 4:00pm    |
| Fri 2 Aug     | Y | Y | Whole School Music Concert, Cuff Hall; 6:00pm – 8:00pm                                |
| Wed 7 Aug     | Y |   | Preparatory School Parent-Teacher Interviews; 3:15pm – 8:00pm                         |
| Sun 11 Aug    | Y |   | Vietnam Veterans Day March, Springwood  |
| M12– F16 Aug  |   | Y | Science Week Celebrations, Junior School  |
| Wed 14 Aug    |   |   | IPSHA Performing Arts Festival, Sydney Town Hall; 6:45pm – 8:00pm                     |
| Thu 16 Aug    |   | Y | WAS Athletics Carnival, Scots All Saints College, Bathurst                            |
| Tue 20 Aug    |   | Y | Write A Book In A Day, Selected Students, JS Library; 8:00am – 6:00pm                 |
| Tue 20 Aug    | Y | Y | General P&F Meeting held at the Preparatory Campus                                    |
| Wed 21 Aug    | Y |   | Book Week Book Parade, Preparatory School   |
| Tue 22 Aug    |   | Y | Pre-K STEPS Vision Screening  |
| Tue 22 Aug    |   | Y | Book Week Parade and Author Visit, Junior School Library                              |
| Sat 24 Aug    | Y | Y | Parents' and Friends' Association Annual Trivia Night, Cuff Hall; 6:30pm – 10:30pm    |
| Mon 26 Aug    | Y |   | Pre-K Stay and Play Morning, Preparatory School; 9:00am – 11:00am                     |
| Wed 28 Aug    |   | Y | HICES Athletics Carnival, Sydney Olympic Park Athletics Centre (SOPAC), Homebush      |
| Thu 29 Aug    | Y | Y | Early Learning Sports Carnival at the Preparatory School                              |
| Thurs 29 Aug  | Y |   | P&F Father's Day Stall, Preparatory School  |
| Fri 30 Aug    |   | Y | P&F Fathers' Day Stall, Junior School   |
| Fri 30 Aug    | Y |   | P&F Fathers' Day Breakfast, Preparatory School  |
| Fri 30 Aug    |   | Y | Tour de Montagnes Bleues, Junior School; 9:00am – 12:00pm                             |
| Sat 31 Aug    |   | Y | Tournament of Minds Regional Competition, Western Sydney University; 7:30am – 5:30pm  |
| M2-W4 Sep     |   | Y | Stage 3 Canberra Trip   |
| Fri 6 Sep     | Y | Y | P&F Combined Prep & Junior School Bowling Night                                       |
| Mon 9 Sep     | Y |   | Preparatory School Book-a-Tour Morning  |
| M9-W11 Sep    |   | Y | Life Education, PK-Year 6, Junior School; 8:30am – 3:00pm                             |
| Thu 12 Sep    | Y |   | Tour-de-Vallee, Preparatory School  |
| Thu 12 Sep    |   | Y | CIS Athletics Carnival, Sydney Olympic Park Athletics Centre (SOPAC), Homebush        |
| Sat 14 Sep    | Y |   | Preparatory School Open Morning   |
| Sun 15 Sep    | Y |   | Tournament of Minds State Finals, University of NSW; 7.30am – 5.30pm                  |
| Mon 16 Sep    | Y | Y | Year 5 2020 Information Night, Junior School; 7:00pm – 8:00pm                         |
| Wed 18 Sep    |   | Y | Early Learning Stay and Play Day, Junior School; 9:00am – 11:00am                     |
| Thu 19 Sep    |   | Y | Parent-Teacher Interviews Pre-K & K, Student Led Conferences Years 1-6, Junior School |
| Fri 20 Sep    |   | Y | P&F Mexican Fiesta Disco, Junior School   |
| Wed 25 Sep    |   | Y | Years 5/6 PA Class Soiree   |
| Thu 26 Sep    | Y |   | Compassion Mufti Day, Preparatory School  |
| Fri 27 Sep    | Y | Y | Valedictory Day   |
| Fri 27 Sep    | Y | Y | End of Term 3   |