



BLUE MOUNTAINS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

2019 End of Term 2 Letter - Senior School

Dear Parents and Carers

Term 2 Highlights

This term all students in the Senior School have been provided with a wide range of opportunities to grow. Students have been stretched academically in the classroom and through specific events including the challenging Da Vinci Decathlon and Tournament of the Minds. Of course a special mention needs to be made of our Kids' Lit Team who will represent the School on the world stage and I would like to thank the School community for getting behind this team.

This term we have also welcomed the President of Bosch Australia and New Zealand to present the prize money to our winning F1 in Schools Team who will also represent the School at the highest level. Again, I thank the School community for getting behind these students.

Term 2 is also an important term for Year 11 students. Many hours of preparation culminated in the 2019 Debutante Ball – an evening of celebration and an important rite of passage. Our Year 11 students have also been challenged to 'step up' as emerging leaders in the School, with a new leadership team announced below. And who could forget the outstanding performances of Les Misérables, which showcased just what is possible for students united around a common purpose in community. Of course, this is a wonderful metaphor for what we seek for each and every student in the Senior School. To see them take on new challenges through which they can grow and flourish in the classroom, on the stage, in the team huddle and as they prepare for life beyond school. .

Future Focus

Education is about possibilities and we know that the future choices students face have never been more dynamic. We are committed to preparing students for the most positive future. Right now, students may want to consider engaging with the opportunity to complete coffee making training with our resident barista, Mr Greg Broome. For others, this means exploring post-school options, early entry to university and work experience options. This term we have been committed to regularly communicating a selection of some of best opportunities for students through the weekly Careers Newsletter and also providing opportunities for students to attend key careers forums. We are also aware that life as a teenager is challenging and we remain committed to looking after each and every student in the Senior School. For Year 10 students, this meant attending the 2019 Stand Tall Event to hear stories of hope and resilience with over 6,000 other high school students. For all students, there was also the opportunity to engage in a Student Wellbeing survey, where they were also able to provide a voice on the things which matter to them.

Improving Student Feedback

Someone once said that the one constant in life is change. For all of our students, we know that it is not just Mathematics and Science that they need to learn but life itself, and the ability to grow through change. To this end, the staff in the Senior School are committed to providing feedback to help our students grow to take greater responsibility for their own learning. Semester 1 reports can now be accessed via the Portal and many parents and carers will already be aware that we have overhauled the way we report student effort. We want to demystify what it means to be an engaged learner and provide the most specific and constructive feedback possible. We call this the Learning Engagement Profile. This feedback shows parents, carers and students how students are tracking in being organised, in developing the dispositions that promote learning and how they work with others. This profile will be provided in reports for students in Years 7-11 and we trust this will spark meaningful conversations.



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Uniform and Lockers

It has been pleasing to note the manner in which our students are wearing the School uniform more consistently. At times, this requires layering up to brace cold conditions and many students are commenting on how warm and dry they are in the School's all weather jacket, which can be worn to and from School as an alternative to the blazer in Terms 2 and 3. Students are also encouraged to have a sense of occasion when attending Chapel and Assemblies by ensuring they have a blazer. Occasionally, there is a need to clarify expectations with our students and we also know that sometimes school shoes can break unexpectedly or blazers need dry cleaning. Thank you for communicating with us in such situations. To clarify what we expect for uniform and appearance, please refer to the guidelines in student diaries.

From Term 3 students in Years 7 and 8 need to keep their mobile phones and any other smart devices in their lockers between 8:30am and 3:00pm. To make sure any devices and other valuables are secure, we ask that all students have a strong padlock to use on their lockers. This needs to be something a little more substantial than the type of lock used on a suitcase.

Student Leadership in 2020 and Beyond

During the Term 1 break I was able to spend some time with Mr Maynard to discuss current student leadership positions and consider future possibilities. This was an exciting opportunity to consider how students can work through the Senior School to develop leadership skills firsthand. To gain skills in running a meeting, developing a plan of action, lobbying for change and making things happen. We want students to lead student culture and align their own passions and gifts with key commitments of the School in areas such as sustainability, student learning, community engagement and student wellbeing. To that end, a number of new leadership portfolios have been created, to be led by Year 11 students but with membership open to any student in Years 7-11. In doing so, all students in the Senior School can be involved in meaningful action. We also want to maintain long held positions, including those students who lead House and School Culture and co-curricular activities, and it is with much excitement that I would like to announce the following appointments for 2019-20.

School Captains:	April Foster-Powell and Nicholas Mayrhofer
Vice-Captains:	Kara Charlton and Balint Boda
Performing Arts Captains:	Jasmine Snow and Alpha Sylla
Music Captains:	Belle Ashford and Selwood Hardaker
Audio-Visual Captain:	William Hedges
Sustainability Captain:	Lucy Burrell
Student Learning Captain:	Jiaying Liu
Student Wellbeing Captains:	Abbie Clyne and Anderson Christie
Community Engagement Captain:	Holly Camilleri
Deane House Captains:	Evie Saville and Finnian O'Connor
Hughes House Captains:	Hayley Morgan and Jeremy Colbourn
Kelley House Captains:	Marni Brown and Henry Willmore
MacLaurin House Captains:	Lily Thomas and Ethan Ward
Pitt House Captains:	Madeline Phillips and Simon Dowd
Ziele House Captain:	Hayli Shiels and Charlie Campbell

Students appointed to the Years 7-11 Student Representative Council (SRC), a key body for student voice, are to be led by the School and Vice Captains in 2019-20. Appointments to the SRC will be announced early in Term 3. The vast majority of students in Year 11 will also have the opportunity to commence a one term trial as House Prefects, which commences next term. These will be the students who set the tone in the Senior School and lead others. I look forward to supporting all students involved in leadership portfolios.



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Senior School Staffing Changes

At the end of Term 2 Mrs Kylie Hunter concluded her time in the Senior School in the Humanities Department. I would like to acknowledge the professionalism and dedication of Mrs Hunter and thank her for her service to the School. Mrs Lauren Wade will be stepping into the Humanities Department where we know her qualifications and experience with Stage 6 Legal Studies will be greatly valued. Mrs Wade will continue with her Year 12 Pitt Tutor group while Year 9 Ziele students will now have Miss Gonzalez and Ms Mion as their Tutors. I would also like to welcome back to the Senior School Mrs Maria Anagnostopoulos from maternity leave to her role as Head of Pitt House. Mrs Anagnostopoulos will now take over the tutelage of Year 9 Pitt House students, with Mr Josh Watts moving to the Year 8 Ziele Tutor group. We thank Mr. Watts for capably leading the 'Green Army' during the period of Mrs Anagnostopoulos' maternity leave. Mrs Jacqueline Haines will also commence working alongside Mrs Leah Opie as acting Head of Deane House, with Mrs Opie taking maternity leave from mid-term 3.

Best Wishes to Year 12

This term I have regularly walked into the Library Resource Centre to hear our Year 12 students in conversations about the finer points of Physics. I also regularly see Year 12 classes deep in learning. In fact, one of my strongest memories of this term was the sheer determination of one student to make sure they got to School for their Year 12 classes when our School was blanketed in snow. I know just how purposefully our Year 12 students are working to master new concepts and prepare for the Trial HSC examinations and I would like to pass on my best wishes to every student in Year 12 as they make their final preparations for Week 3 next term. We are all here to help.

I trust the mid-semester break is a worthwhile time of rest and recreation and I look forward to partnering with you again next term. This is also a great time for our staff to catch their breath and prepare for our next semester and all of the opportunities this entails.

Kind regards,

Andrew Beitsch
Head of Senior School

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.

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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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.

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@bmgns.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.

The Term 3 School Calendar of Events follows

Term 3 Dates

Senior School



Blue Mountains
Grammar School

This schedule contains important dates for students from the Senior School campus

Date	Event
Wed 24 Jul	Term 3 commences
Fri 26 Jul	Mufti Day - Black Dog Institute
Wed 31 Jul	Years 10, 11 & 12 UAC Information Night, Chapel, 6:00pm - 7:00pm
Wed 31 Jul	Year 11 2020, Subject Selection Night, Chapel, 7:00pm - 8:45pm
Fri 2 Aug	Year 11 Leadership Induction Ceremony, Cuff Hall, 9:30am - 10:30am
Fri 2 Aug	Whole School Music Concert, Cuff Hall, 6:00pm to 8:30pm
Sat 3 Aug	Years 7 to 11 Winter Sleep Out, Sports Centre, Saturday 3 Aug 4:30pm - Sunday 4 Aug 8:30am
Mon 5 Aug	Year 12 Trial HSC Commences
Wed 7 Aug	Year 9 2020, Subject Selection Night, Chapel, 7:00pm to 8:30pm
Sun 11 Aug	Vietnam Veterans' Day March, Springwood
Fri 16 Aug	Mufti Day - F1 in Schools
Tue 20 Aug	General P&F Meeting held at the Preparatory Campus
Thu 22 Aug	Senior School Athletics Carnival, Pitt Park
Sat 24 Aug	ISA Winter Sports Finals
Sat 24 Aug	Parents' and Friends' Association Annual Trivia Night, Cuff Hall, 6:30pm - 10:30pm
Fri 30 Aug	Annual Ski Trip, Thredbo, Fri 30 Aug 12:15pm - Sun 1 Sep 10:00pm
Mon 2 Sep	Co-curricular Photo Day
Tue 10 Sep	ISA Athletics Carnival, Sydney Olympic Park Athletics Centre (SOPAC), Homebush
Tue 17 Sep	Vaccination "Catch Up", Residence, 9:30am - 11:00am
Fri 20 Sep	Year 12 Formal, Hydro Majestic, 7:00pm - 10:30pm
Thu 26 Sep	Year 12 Valedictory Dinner, Fairmont Resort, 6:30pm - 11:00pm
Fri 27 Sep	Valedictory Day
Fri 27 Sep	End of Term 3