

## Thomas Reddall High School

Principal – Mrs J Fuller  
Deputy Principals – Ms L McGarry & Mrs J Bullock

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to 2021! I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of our students and their families, but particularly to our new families; we welcome you to the T-RED Community.

At this time of year, I like to give parents and carers some updated information about the start of the school year and some reminders that will help us both, and ultimately, your child and their learning.

### Staffing

We have been very fortunate not to have a large staff turnover this year. Ms Perusco left at the end of the year to take up a 12 month temporary position at Melville High School. Her position has been advertised this week and we anticipate that we will have it filled shortly.

The following staff are on leave:

- Mrs Hamilton – Term 1; Ms O'Brien is replacing (HSIE)
- Ms Denton – Term 1; Mr Rodr is replacing (English)
- Mr Soliman – early Term 1; Ms Kaur is replacing (Mathematics)
- Ms Donachie – 2021; Ms Sharma is replacing (School Counsellor)
- Ms Kennedy – Term 1; Mr McLaren (Careers Advisor)
- Ms Wilson – early Term 1; yet to be replaced (EAL/D and German)

We welcome the following staff to our school community:

- Mr Moules; CAPA Faculty
- Ms Lata; Relief Casual
- Ms Jaen; PDHPE Faculty
- Ms Amotawa-Hohepa; new position – Community Liaison Officer

As mentioned last year, we will be advertising for a Head Teacher, Learning and Engagement and a Business Manager early this term. Currently, our Librarian position is unfilled but we hope to have that filled shortly.

### Photo Day

We understand that Photo Day was early this year. Obviously this was not our preference, but we have to work with what we have. MSP Photography apologised for the incorrect link that was sent out late and has given families until 21 February 2021 to order and pay for their photos. If affordability is still an issue for families, please let us know and we will work with you and MSP to resolve the issue. We don't want any families missing out on photographs of their child.

## Swimming Carnival

This is also very early in the year and on tomorrow, Friday 5 February 2021. Please remember this is a regular school day and all students must be in attendance. If your child does not attend, you will need to advise the school about the reason for their absence. If your child is unwell, or showing any of the signs of COVID-19, we ask that you not send your child to the Carnival, you take them for a COVID test and explain the absence through the Front Office.

Students and staff will be adhering to social distancing protocols and the COVID requirements of the Aquatic Centre whilst there. We are uncertain about access to canteen facilities so we encourage all students to bring food and drink with them. The forecast is for a warm day, so plenty of water, sunscreen and sun safe clothing. Please note that bikinis are not appropriate attire for a Swimming Carnival.

There will be **no walking group** this year and **no supervision at school**, so please ensure you arrange transport for your child to and from The Gordon Fetterplace Aquatic Centre (Bradbury Pool). Please ensure you promptly collect your child from the pool at the conclusion (2:35pm) of the Carnival as staff cannot wait around for parents to collect their children.

Any student who travels to school on the ASTP, please be advised that the ASTP will not drop the students to the pool or collect them. If this affects your child, you would have received a call from the school and alternative arrangements made. If there are any concerns please do not hesitate to contact us at the school as soon as possible.

Due to COVID guidelines access to the changerooms and toilets will be limited, so please ensure your child comes dressed in their swimming attire under their PE uniform or house colours.

Bradman – Blue (Surnames A – D)  
Ella – Red (Surnames E – L)  
Coolagong – Green (Surnames M – R)  
Jackson – Yellow (Surnames S -Z)

Please understand that any child who arrives at the pool without a note will not be able to swim. Similarly, any students with a permission note that has not been ticked for swimming consent and ability, will not be allowed in the pool. As you can appreciate, we need to have written parental permission for any child to enter the water.

We have been informed by the pool that spectators can now attend if this is your preference. Please note that any spectators need to sit external to the pool fencing.

## Lateness

Positive attendance and punctuality are good habits for students to get in to as they prepare and transition into the workforce. Please ensure you are fostering these good habits every day. We have had a number of students who have already been repeatedly late to school and it is just not acceptable. It causes work for the Front Office staff, disrupts the teacher and the other students when they arrive and worst of all, your child misses important classwork and instruction during their period of lateness or absence.

We do understand that there are times when the absence is legitimate and we simply ask that you let us know. We really would appreciate your cooperation with this. We are also willing to support you and your endeavours to get your child to school on time. Please contact their Year Advisor in the first instance.

## Absences

We understand that there are often times when our students are unwell and you are encouraged to keep them home until they are symptom free and well enough to be at school. We also understand that, from time to time, situations will arise where students need to be absent from school. Illness and these infrequent situations should be the only reasons for your child to be absent.

I have attached some DoE information regarding attendance to this letter. Please understand that we can only **explain** absences when they fall in to the categories attached.

You can explain your child's absence, or lateness, any of these ways:

- Responding to our SMS on the day of their absence
- Writing a note and asking your child to drop it into the Front Office
- Sending an email
- Calling the school

## Diaries

All students have been issued with a diary this year. Please have a look at it regularly and have discussions with your child about their learning. When their Assessment Booklets come out, ensure you work with them to enter important dates and events.

As mentioned on Facebook, we are now an AVID school and one of the five pillars of AVID is *Organisation*. This is what we are working on with all students, particularly Year 7. You can support us, and your child, by working with them to ensure they are organised every day by checking their diary for homework and assignments.

Our diaries are professionally made for our students. We would appreciate your support to instil a sense of importance around them. As you can tell from the quality, they are not cheap. We invest in them for each student because we value them and believe they are important in enabling our students to be organised.

## Uniform

It has been pleasing to see the number of students taking pride in their school and appearance and being dressed in full school uniform every day. Our wider community make judgements on our school based on how our students are dressed each day, and we want to convey how great our school is out in our community.

We ask that you continue to have high expectations of your children in regards to uniform and continue to support our endeavours to have every child in full school uniform, every day. Much like setting up good habits in regards to attendance, good habits in terms of dress standards are important to foster at this time.

Please remember that tracksuit pants, leggings/tights and short sport shorts are not appropriate attire for school. Hoodies should not be worn by any students in Year 7-10; they are being phased out as they are a health and safety issue.

If there are affordability issues please contact the school and we can try to assist you where possible. Please understand if we have helped you out previously with uniform costs, and your child still does not wear the uniform, it is unlikely that we can help you out again.

Please remember that **Lowes** is the only uniform stockist.

We will be reviewing our uniform later in the year and will be seeking parent input into this process.

## **Sentral Parent Portal**

It has been great to see the number of parents signing up to our Parent Portal. Just a reminder, we can only approve parent email addresses, not student emails. It is essential that we have all parents on this system so we can get information out to you as soon as we have it. We have also had a number of requests that we cannot approve because an email address has been entered incorrectly or an email address that does not exist has been entered.

The Parent Portal will only work with a parent email address that is accurate. If you could help us out with this, it would be appreciated.

There is also an app that you can download on your phone to access the portal. This information was posted on our website last year and will be reposted next week.

## **NASCA**

NASCA: National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy

This year we have partnered with NASCA and are very excited about the opportunities that this partnership will bring to our school community. We have already met some of the NASCA team, and our staff had the privilege of being taught some Traditional Indigenous Games (TIG) on Staff Development Day. NASCA will be onsite Mondays and Fridays, providing in-class support and cultural activities. Students will need to opt-in to this support and more information will come out shortly. You can find out more about the program here: <https://nasca.org.au/>

## **Social Media**

Facebook is our best and most up to date source of information. We are pleased that so many members of our community engage in our social media platforms. Please understand that staff often manage the Facebook page outside of school hours, and we take a lot of time to ensure that our parents and community are kept as up to date as possible, in real time.

We ask that you please refrain from any negative or inappropriate comments about our school on social media; especially on our page. If you have an issue or concern, social media is not going to help you resolve it. Making inappropriate comments on social media damages the reputation of our school; the school that you choose to send your child to. Speaking to staff at the school will help you to resolve your concerns, and you are encouraged to contact us with any issues. We are more than happy to support wherever we can.

As you can appreciate, any negative comments on our page are deleted as there is just no need for them and there is just no place for them on our page. Followers who continue to make such comments will be removed from the page. We don't have the time to manage the comments on the page. Please understand this is not an action that we want to take and I am sure you can appreciate where we are coming from. Our staff and our students work hard to convey what a great school we have, and it is disappointing to have a small minority that undo all of that with their negativity in the public domain.

## **Payments**

Payments can be made easily and securely through our website. Just click on the 'Make a Payment' tab at the top of the front page. This contactless method of payment is our preferred option. All fees, excursions and other money payable to the school can be done through this link: <https://thomasredd-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/>

## Visitors to Our School

We are pleased that we can have visitors to our school once again! Unfortunately we will have to be cautious and COVID-safe; preferring most contact to be via phone where possible.

We ask that you follow the physical distancing protocols whilst onsite; especially in our Front Office which is only a small space.

All visitors must check in at the Office. This will be a three part process, so please allow extra time and be patient with our staff whilst they complete all of the necessary checks. Bringing your smartphone and having the Service NSW app installed will fasten the process for us.

## External Providers

We have already had many requests from external service providers to deliver therapies to students at school. These requests cannot come from the providers, they need to come from the parent or carer in the first instance. Whilst we understand the need for and benefit of the therapy, it is not always possible for us to accommodate the request. Please understand that school is not the ideal place to have these delivered, as it is an interruption to learning and places greater demands on our staff. We will try to facilitate on a case by case basis, but please understand that it is just not possible to meet the demand that we have and there will be disappointment.

Parent Guidelines can be found here:

<https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/29fcc734-d372-40fe-a25e3f7cc37d88e/1/External-providers-information-for-parents.pdf>

## Year 7 Meet the Teacher


Save the date! Wednesday 17 February 2021, 4-5pm. More information will come out when we confirm the COVID guidelines that apply at the time.

## Final Notes

I knew this would be information overload, but I thought it important to make all families aware of expectations early on. I thank you for your ongoing support and look forward to working collaboratively with you throughout 2021. One of our aims this year is to increase parent engagement, so we hope to see many faces at our events throughout the year. These plans are all pending the COVID guidelines that are in place at the time.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us at any time. We hope that your children have had a settled start to the year and look forward to seeing you all in person soon!

Yours sincerely



Mrs J Fuller

**Principal**

4 February 2021



# Compulsory School Attendance

## Information for parents

Education for your child is important and regular attendance at school is essential for your child to achieve their educational best and increase their career and life options. NSW public schools work in partnership with parents to encourage and support regular attendance of children and young people. When your child attends school every day, learning becomes easier and your child will build and maintain friendships with other children.

### What are my legal responsibilities?

Education in New South Wales is compulsory for all children between the ages of six years and below the minimum school leaving age. The *Education Act 1990* requires that parents ensure their children of compulsory school age are enrolled at, and regularly attend school, or, are registered with the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards for homeschooling.

Once enrolled, children are required to attend school each day it is open for students.

### The importance of arriving on time

Arriving at school and class on time:

- Ensures that students do not miss out on important learning activities scheduled early in the day
- Helps students learn the importance of punctuality and routine
- Give students time to greet their friends before class
- Reduces classroom disruption

Lateness is recorded as a partial absence and must be explained by parents.

### What if my child has to be away from school?

On occasion, your child may need to be absent from school. Justified reasons for student absences may include:

- being sick, or having an infectious disease
- having an unavoidable medical appointment
- being required to attend a recognised religious holiday
- exceptional or urgent family circumstance (e.g. attending a funeral)

Following an absence from school you must ensure that within 7 days you provide your child's school with a verbal or written explanation for the absence. However, if the school has not received an explanation from you within 2 days, the school may contact you to discuss the absence.

Principals may decline to accept an explanation that you have provided if they do not believe the absence is in the best interest of your child. In these circumstances your child's absence would be recorded as unjustified. When this happens the principal will discuss their decision with you and the reasons why.

Principals may request medical certificates or other documentation when frequent or long term absences are explained as being due to illness. Principals may also seek parental permission to speak with medical specialists to obtain information to collaboratively develop a health care plan to support your child. If the request is denied, the principal can record the absences as unjustified.

### Travel

Families are encouraged to travel during school holidays. If travel during school term is necessary, discuss this with your child's school principal. An *Application for Extended Leave* may need to be completed. Absences relating to travel will be marked as leave on the roll and therefore contribute to your child's total absences for the year.

In some circumstances students may be eligible to enrol in distance education for travel periods over 50 school days. This should be discussed with your child's school principal.





### **My child won't go to school. What should I do?**

You should contact the principal as soon as possible to discuss the issue and ask for help. Strategies to help improve attendance may include a referral to the school's learning and support team or linking your child with appropriate support networks. The principal may seek further support from the Home School Liaison Program to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan.

### **What might happen if my child continues to have unacceptable absences?**

It is important to understand that the Department of Education and Communities may be required to take further action where children of compulsory school age have recurring numbers of unexplained or unjustified absences from school.

Some of the following actions may be undertaken:

- Compulsory Schooling Conferences

You may be asked, along with your child, to attend a Compulsory Schooling Conference. The conference will help to identify the supports your child may need to have in place so they attend school regularly. The school, parents and agencies will work together to develop an agreed plan (known as Undertakings) to support your child's attendance at school.

- Application to the Children's Court – Compulsory Schooling Order

If your child's attendance at school remains unsatisfactory the Department

may apply to the Children's Court for a *Compulsory Schooling Order*. The Children's Court magistrate may order a Compulsory Schooling Conference to be convened.

- Prosecution in the Local Court

School and Department staff remain committed to working in partnership with you to address the issues which are preventing your child's full participation at school. In circumstances where a breach of compulsory schooling orders occurs further action may be taken against a parent in the Local Court. The result of court action can be the imposition of a community service order or a fine.

### **What age can my child leave school?**

All New South Wales students must complete Year 10 or its equivalent. After Year 10, and up until they reach 17 years of age, there are a range of flexible options for students to complete their schooling.

### **Working in Partnership**

The Department of Education and Communities recognises that working collaboratively with students and their families is the best way to support the regular attendance of students at school.

We look forward to working in partnership with you to support your child to fulfil their life opportunities.

**If a student misses as little as 8 days in a school term, by the end of primary school they'll have missed over a year of school.**

Further information regarding school attendance can be obtained from the following websites:

#### **Policy, information and brochures:**

Please visit the Department of Education's *Policy library*

#### **The school leaving age:**

Please visit the Department of Education's *Wellbeing and Learning* website

#### **Do you need an interpreter?**

Interpreting services are available on request, including for the hearing impaired. The Telephone Interpreter Service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on 131 450. You will not be charged for this service.

For further advice and questions contact your educational services team

T 131 536

#### **Learning and Engagement**

Student Engagement & Interagency Partnerships

T 9244 512

[www.dec.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au)

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