



From the Principal's desk

A regular update about all that is happening at Heathmont College

20 February, 2021

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Feedback and update on newsletter publication

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback about our newsletter in our last edition. It was helpful to get your thoughts on how you want to receive your updates from the school and the frequency with which you want to receive them.

Based on your feedback, we will be enacting the following:

- Newsletters will be published monthly in either the second or third week of each month depending on term break timings
- in between newsletters, there will be these "from the Principal's desk" updates every two weeks
- we are exploring the use of more interactive newsletter formats to make it easier to read the newsletters on mobile devices

Please keep an eye on Compass for updates throughout the term and please continue to provide us with feedback using this link <https://forms.gle/7qifDaTCsdXRMfCy7>

What's been happening?



The past couple of weeks have seen quite a number of things happening at the college with all students settling in to their new classes and getting to know their teachers. The sudden pivot to remote learning again this week came as a bit of a surprise but the whole community responded without missing a step! Even our new year 7 students and our new teachers to the school were, for the most part, able to get on and access their lessons and WebEx sessions. We had a few minor hiccups and a number of students and teachers who needed to reach out for IT support or to get log in details for Compass or computers but, by and large, we saw great engagement from all students and staff. While we do hope that remote learning will be a rare and short part of our future schooling, we are definitely getting better at it each and every time it occurs and what we learn from these experiences certainly makes us get better as a learning community. Just prior to the pivot to remote learning (in fact, earlier in the day) we had our leadership inauguration assembly and first house assemblies for the year. The leadership Inauguration was held over WebEx with students meeting in their house spaces. It was a very short ceremony as the rest of the time for these assemblies was to be dedicated to organising the school swimming carnival - which ultimately did not happen. In our inauguration ceremony, our student leaders were announced including our school captains for 2021 who are:

- Amelia
- Ava
- Lily
- Madison

The girls were each interviewed about their time at the school and the following are excerpts from those interviews.





"...I wanted to be a maker of change. Being a College Captain is being someone that other people can rely on to see their ideas come to life." - Amelia

"I've always looked up to the college captains throughout my time at Heathmont College. I really want to branch the pathway from the Principal team to the students. I want the students to feel like they are able to voice what they want for the future of Heathmont College." - Madison

"I think a good leader needs empathy. It's really hard to lead your peers if you don't know how they are feeling. I think being a good listener is also really important; you might have ideas yourself, but at the end of the day you are representing your peers." - Ava

"I want to help create a safe space for people who think they might be a bit different... I really want to bring together the school community and make sure we are representing everyone who feels like they're not being represented." - Lily

What's coming up - Key dates and events



- Senior Summer Sport - Thursday 25 February

- Year 7 Swimming Day - Friday 26 February
- Intermediate Sport - Monday 1 March
- Mullum Swimming event - Thursday 4 March
- Career advisory interviews will begin from 1 March
- Photo catch up day - Tuesday 2 March
- Public Holiday - Monday 8 March

A reminder to parents and families to order school photos - all information has been provided in a number of posts on Compass by Nina Ling.

Tutor program update



We are currently identifying students for the first tranche of our tutoring program. Josh Pearce has sent out a link to a referral form through Compass for parents and families to put students forward for this program. You can access this link here <https://forms.gle/HakUuMcpQSEWxPgW6> Please note that even if your child is not included in this first tranche, we will be running this program across the entire year and cycling students in and out of it according to their needs and so they will likely have an opportunity to be involved at some point. We are looking to employ a range of tutoring options including withdrawal groups, in class support and afterschool sessions depending on student and parent preference.

Mobile phones and lockers update



All students have now been provided with a locker in one of the existing locker bays. With this though, we are seeing some concerning patterns emerge regarding the use of lockers and secure storage - particularly for things like mobile phones and laptops. Currently, there are far too many students who do not have locks on their lockers. This means that students are choosing to breach the mobile phone policy by carrying phones with them instead of leaving them in their lockers as they are required to according to this policy. We have a number of students who are having to sign their phones in to the office of a morning for safe keeping as they have had their phones confiscated multiple times in any one week. This is a pattern that we must stop as it breaches the ministerial directive for mobile phones to not be used during the school day. It is also concerning that students are not keeping locks on lockers as this opens up the possibility of theft from lockers. We have been locking the locker bays during class time to avoid thefts and to discourage students from being out of their classes during lesson time but this is not an ideal strategy in the long term. Over the next few weeks, we will be looking into the locker / lock situation and determining which students have locks and which don't. We will collect feedback from students about why they are not using locks and look to modify the current locker bay arrangements based on this feedback. We have already put in place protocols around allowing year 7 students to access their lockers ahead of the rest of the students at the end of the day to make sure that they are able to get in and get what they need to take home in time to make the buses, if they travel on them. We are looking into some other temporary strategies that we might employ to reduce the congestion in locker bays while we look for more permanent solutions. As the school is growing, crowding in locker bays will continue to be an issue and so we need to start to implement ways to manage this challenge. This will be an ongoing focus at the college.

Principal's Advisory Group



As I have previously mentioned previously, I am looking to establish a volunteer group of students from across all year levels and programs at the school to provide advice and guidance to the school leadership around areas that the school can improve. Students who are interested in being part of this group are encouraged to register their interest using the following link:

<https://forms.gle/Mc4VAspKDNdPvJLF7> I will then determine a schedule for meetings and will contact interested students to be part of these meetings. Meetings will be held during the school day and will require students to be withdrawn from classes for small periods of time.

Thank you for reading this update. If you have any feedback, please provide it here:

<https://forms.gle/rHT1sMKqxbhZ4t6bA>