



HEAD OF YEAR 8

Newsletter

Rex Bertrand

Year 8 Mid-Term 3 Parent Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to Term 4! It's hard to believe the year is drawing to a close, but we are excited to finish 2025 with a strong focus on wellbeing, learning and connection.

Looking Back

Term 3 was a busy and successful time for Year 8, filled with opportunities for growth, learning, and connection. Highlights included *Let's Chat*, where students built cultural awareness and explored healthy relationships with Emma Wynne, focusing on red and green flag behaviours, assertive communication, empathy, and understanding coercive control. *Brainstorm Productions* delivered a powerful live theatre performance followed by a Q&A, helping students reflect on respectful relationships, resilience, and positive connections. The *Be Challenged Day* encouraged teamwork and problem-solving, fostering leadership and resilience, while the Year Level Assembly celebrated academic and cultural achievements. Through the Connect Program, students engaged in lessons on resilience, respect, and teamwork, with reflections and goal-setting guided by "Begin With the End in Mind." They also explored identity and empathy in the Positive Health and Relationships strand and contributed to a service project through *GEM in Action*, with a focus on gratitude and values. These events and activities reflected the commitment of both staff and students to making Year 8 a year of growth, belonging, and engagement. A special thank you is extended to Connect teachers for their dedication and leadership in supporting the program.

The Term 4 Connect Class Program focuses on five key themes designed to support student growth and wellbeing. Thinking Big encourages students to broaden their perspectives and aspire beyond their current limits, challenging them to consider new possibilities for learning and life. Momentum: Strength and Identity explores personal strengths, resilience, and healthy habits for long-term success. Engagement centres on reflection and goal setting through The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens, with an emphasis on "Putting First Things First." In Positive Health and Relationships, students will cultivate courage, explore identity and purpose, and confront societal pressures through Real Schools. Finally, GEM in Action / Resilience builds on gratitude, empathy, and mindfulness as part of the Resilience Project, while also valuing the connection between strengths, mind, and body. Activities across the term include a goal-setting task, a Year Level Assembly, a Wellbeing BBQ, and the Junior Assembly, where student achievements will be celebrated.

Finishing the Semester Strong – Academic & Wellbeing Tips

Academic Tips – *Thinking Big & Engagement*

- Think big with goals – Set one achievable target for each subject to work towards.
- Break it down – Large tasks feel lighter when you divide them into smaller steps with mini-deadlines.
- Active revision – Teach a concept to a friend or family member — explaining it out loud builds understanding.
- Celebrate progress – Track what you've already completed to stay motivated and engaged.



HEAD OF YEAR 8

Newsletter

Rex Bertrand

Wellbeing Tips – *Momentum, Positive Health & GEM in Action*

- Morning momentum – Start your day with a healthy breakfast and a quick movement routine to energise your body and mind.
- Pause and reset – Practise a two-minute breathing or mindfulness activity when stress builds.
- Identity check-in – Ask yourself, “Am I acting in line with my values today?” and adjust if needed.
- GEM habit – Each evening, write down one thing you’re grateful for, one act of empathy you showed, and one mindful choice you made.

Student Uniform Expectations – Summer Reminder

As the weather warms, we’d like to remind families that students are expected to wear a hat and stay well hydrated. Even a small drop in hydration, as little as 1–2% of body water, can impact a young person’s ability to concentrate, remember information and stay alert. Signs a child is mildly dehydrated include headaches, tiredness and difficulty focusing.

A few additional reminders:

The Gap State High School uniform policy upholds the school’s high standards and aims to ensure students are well presented, respectful, and united, reflecting pride in themselves while promoting a positive image in the community. By wearing the uniform, students share a common identity that fosters inclusion, strengthens connections with peers, and builds a sense of belonging. The policy is also guided by principles of equality, health, safety, comfort, and affordability.

We have noticed that the vast majority of students are following the uniform policy; however, some continue to test the expectations. In these cases, students will be issued with a uniform detention, held in E Block during second break. If students do not attend their detention or fail to adjust their behaviour, a Time for Detention will be issued and parents/carers will be contacted.

Footwear - The required footwear for the formal day uniform is a black leather lace-up shoe. Shoes must have a non-porous leather upper, a solid toe, and a black non-slip rubber sole with a low heel. Leather versions of street shoes are not acceptable.

Sports shoes are to be worn with the sports uniform only and must be lace-up joggers or sports shoes that provide proper heel and arch support. Canvas shoes or street/skate shoes (e.g., Dunlop Volley, Vans) are not acceptable. All footwear worn in laboratories, workshops, kitchens, or arts facilities must comply with Workplace Health and Safety Regulations.

Jewellery – Students may wear up to two earrings in each ear. Hoops large enough for a finger to fit through do not meet workplace health and safety requirements; small sleepers and studs are acceptable. A watch may also be worn. All other jewellery should be removed during the school day. The school’s Uniform Room is located in E03 and is open between 8:10 am and 8:30 am each morning. For more information, please refer to our current Uniform Policy [[here](#)].



HEAD OF YEAR 8

Newsletter

Rex Bertrand

SchoolTV – An Online Mental Health and Wellbeing Platform for Parents

SchoolTV is designed to support schools and their communities in the important task of raising happy, confident, resilient, and mentally healthy young people. We encourage all families to explore this valuable resource as part of ongoing education about issues that can impact children and teenagers. Below are some featured links to topics that may be relevant for Term 4:

- [Cybersafety:](#)
- [Confidence & Motivation](#)
- [School Refusal](#)
- [Body Image](#)



Road Safety Message

Student safety in and around the school continues

to be a priority, and during Term 3 we noticed several concerns around road use, cycling, and movement through the community. We ask all students to pay attention to their surroundings, particularly when crossing driveways and roads, and to avoid distractions such as mobile phones. It is important to be courteous and respectful as a pedestrian, cyclist, skater, or driver, and to park carefully in local streets. On school grounds, bikes should be walked, and skateboards or scooters should be carried until students are offsite. These items must also be stored in the designated racks rather than in stairwells to ensure pathways remain clear and safe. We also remind parents and carers to follow the **Stop, Drop, and Go** rules by not parking in driveways, entering the campus, or using the Uniting Church carpark. By working together and modelling safe and respectful behaviour, we can ensure the wellbeing of all members of our school community.

Parentline – Support for Parents and Carers

At our school, we recognise that parenting can be both rewarding and challenging. From time to time, families may face situations where extra support or guidance can make a real difference. To help with this, we would like to draw your attention to Parentline, a free and confidential service available to parents and carers right across Queensland.

Parentline is staffed by experienced counsellors who understand the pressures that come with raising children and young people. Support is available seven days a week, from 6:00am until midnight, making it accessible for busy families.

You can reach Parentline through a variety of ways:

- Phone: 1300 30 1300
- Webchat: Via the Parentline website
- Online forums: Facilitated by trained counsellors

Parentline can provide assistance with a wide range of parenting concerns. In particular, it is a valuable service for families seeking guidance around bullying—whether your child is being affected by bullying, or if they are displaying bullying behaviours themselves. Counsellors can offer expert advice, emotional support, and referrals to further services when needed.

We encourage all parents and carers in our school community to keep Parentline in mind as a trusted, accessible resource. Whether you are dealing with issues related to behaviour, friendships, bullying, or



HEAD OF YEAR 8

Newsletter

Rex Bertrand

simply need someone to listen and provide guidance, Parentline is there to help. More information, including promotional materials for families, is available on the [Parentline](#) website.

Seeking Support in Term 4

Deputy Principal – Carolyn Speers

Head of Year 8 – Mr Rex Bertrand – E05 Block Staffroom

- Wellbeing support
- General enquiries
- Connection to the Performance and Pathways team

Guidance Officer – Ms Sarah Toohey – Lower E Block Staff room

- Assistance with AARA applications for Year 8
- Guidance, wellbeing, and support
- Future planning and pathways advice

Closing comments

As we move into the final part of the year, we are proud of the way our Year 8 students have continued to grow and take on new challenges. Their effort in both learning and wellbeing programs has been encouraging, and it has been great to see them support each other along the way.

Thank you to our families for your ongoing support. Your involvement makes a real difference to the success of our students. We look forward to finishing 2025 strongly and celebrating the achievements of Year 8 together.

Kind Regards
Rex Bertrand
Head of Year 8