



HEAD OF YEAR 8

ALISON MOORE

Newsletter

TERM 1: PAYING IT FORWARD

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to 2026! I hope your families enjoyed a happy and restful break over the holidays. I'm very much looking forward to supporting your young people again this year and continuing to work in partnership with families to ensure all students feel safe, connected, and a strong sense of belonging at The Gap SHS.

During the first week back with our Year 8 students, our key messages for the cohort are high expectations and no excuses. We expect students to wear the school uniform with pride, demonstrate strong effort in every lesson, and approach learning with a positive attitude in both the classroom and the playground. We emphasise progress over perfection - doing your best, even when learning feels challenging. Central to this is **The Gap Mindset**: giving everything a go, leaning into discomfort, and persisting when things are hard. These expectations will set the foundation for a successful and rewarding year ahead.

This term, our focus is on one of our core school values: **Paying It Forward**. Paying It Forward means using our strengths to lift someone else's day and learning for the future through small, consistent acts of service, gratitude, and contribution.

What Paying It Forward looks like at The Gap SHS:

- Helping others without being asked and supporting the wellbeing of peers.
- Noticing effort and showing gratitude through thanks or acknowledgement.
- Including others and being an upstander in both social and learning spaces.
- Contributing through service, mentoring, leadership, or teamwork.
- Celebrating excellence and taking pride in caring for our shared spaces.



If you have any questions, concerns, or would like further information, please don't hesitate to contact me or any member of the Year 8 team listed below. As always, early communication is encouraged - all matters are important to us, and working together allows us to best support your young person to flourish at The Gap SHS.



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YEAR 8 TEAM

Staff Member	Role	
Alison Moore	Head of Year	General Year Level Support
Carla Sampaio	Guidance Officer	Social and Emotional Wellbeing Support
Georgia Simmonds	Head of Pathways and Performance	Academic Support
Gouri Sharma	Deputy Principal	Year Level Oversight
Martha Cameron	Student Support Coordinator	Year Level Oversight

ADAIR DONALDSON

We will be welcoming back Adair Donaldson this year to present to our whole school. He will be speaking to our cohort on the 30th March. We will be hearing about the legal implications of ethics and choices. I will provide a snapshot of our presentation in our upcoming newsletters.

YEAR 8 CAMP

Year 8 camp will take place in Term 2. The purpose of the Year 8 Camp is to provide opportunities for students to develop independence and interdependence in a supportive team environment. The camp is scheduled for Weeks 6 and 7 of Term 2 at Maroon Outdoor Education Centre (MOEC), near Lake Maroon. Over the four days, students will participate in a range of adventure-based experiences including: high ropes, canoeing, aquatic activities, initiatives and a team building night activity. Students will camp out in tents for one night, and sleep in cabins for the other two nights. More information will be provided over the term.

GET IN TOUCH

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your young person, please don't hesitate to contact me via email at headofyear8@thegapshs.eq.edu.au



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CONNECT UPDATE

GEM Focus:

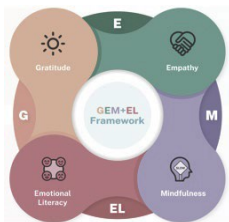
Emotional Literacy

In Connect this term, students will be learning about Emotional Literacy. Emotional Literacy teaches students about the impact of emotions on mood, behaviours, and wellbeing. In our lessons will focus on:

GEM in Action: Gratitude, Values, Resilience & Famous Failures

Positive Health and Relationships: Identifying emotions in others

Engagement: Games & Movement



Here is an activity you can complete as a family which will reinforce understanding:

TRY IT AT HOME FAMILY ACTIVITY:

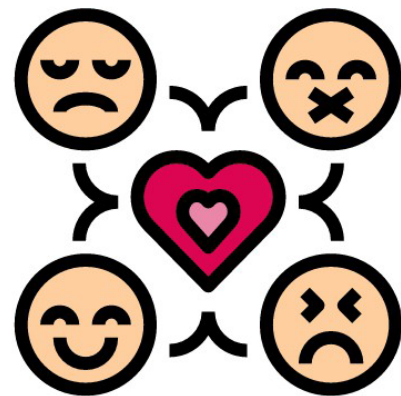
WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL...

YOU WILL NEED:

- Time together as a family.

WHAT TO DO:

- Get together as a family. This may be after dinner or just sitting together in the living room.
- As a family, take turns sharing events in your life or parts of your day that made you feel:
 - » Joy
 - » Excitement
 - » Frustration
 - » Regret
 - » Love
- Sharing stories about your past that your children might not be familiar with can help strengthen their feelings of belonging and lead to higher self-esteem and a greater sense of identity.



Family Emotional Literacy habit builder:

Every night at dinner, have each person describe a feeling they felt during the day and what made them feel like that. If negative, discuss what did, or could have helped them turn their emotion around to positive.



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Real Schools Partnership & Affective Language



As part of our partnership with **Real Schools**, our school uses **affective language** to support positive behaviour and strong relationships.

Affective statements express personal feelings — both positive and negative — to help children understand how their behaviour impacts others.

What does this sound like?

It's as simple as adding a feeling word to a request you might already use.

- Instead of *"Put your towel on the rack,"* we might say:
"It upsets me when the towel is left on the floor - can you please hang it up?"
- Positive examples are just as important:
"I'm really pleased that you hung up your towel."

Why do we want to use affective language?

Affective statements help young people develop **empathy**, accountability, and self-awareness. Over time, our young people begin to think about how their actions affect others and adjust their behaviour accordingly - not out of fear of punishment, but because they care.

What does this look like at school and at home?

You'll hear staff and students naming feelings, acknowledging positive choices, and calmly addressing behaviours in a respectful way. Families can support this by using similar language at home focusing on how actions make others feel, rather than just the behaviour itself.

HOME Default statement	HOME Restorative Statement	SCHOOL Default Statement	SCHOOL Restorative Statement
"Please set the table for dinner"	"I would be really pleased if you set the table for dinner"	"Please put your hat on"	"I'd really love to see you wear your hat properly"
"Don't leave your shoes in the hallway"	"I'd like to see your shoes put away, so no one trips on them"	"Thanks for lining up"	"It makes me so proud to see you lining up properly"
"Thank you for being kind to your sister"	"It makes me overjoyed to see you being kind to your sister"	"Please don't swear"	"It is upsetting to me hearing you use such offensive language; please choose your words carefully"