

# Inaugural School Captain Speech – Liam Chang 2021

Good morning, Mr Couani, Father Jim, Staff, students, and wider school community

“All the adversity I’ve had in my life, all my troubles and obstacles, have strengthened me. You may not realize it when it happens, but a good kick in the teeth may be the best thing in the world for you”. These are the words of Walt Disney, one of the greatest filmmakers of all time. His exceptional cinematic masterpieces are a testament to his perseverance and dedication, and are an example of what these qualities can achieve.

His words sound quite ironic in reference to the last 8 months that we’ve had, considering how many activities and events have been cancelled or restricted due to this global pandemic: However, whilst things haven’t really gone according to plan this year, and despite the fact that we’ve endured lockdown, isolation and the general uncertainty of living through a pandemic...

*we’re still here - and we’re stronger because of it.*

For many of you, this is not the first challenge you have faced and certainly won’t be your last; whether that be making new friends, overcoming rejection, trying to do well in a difficult exam, being overwhelmed by starting high school, and for all you lucky boys sitting in front of me today, starting the HSC. However, the adverse circumstances that we have found ourselves in this year are unlike any other obstacle we’ve had to overcome – because we have all faced it – and by strengthening and supporting one another, we overcame it together.

The challenges and adversity that you’ll come across during your lifetime are kind of like having to eat vegetables for dinner – they don’t really appeal to you and overcoming them can be quite the battle, but in the long run, they will help strengthen you as a person. I was once told by a close friend of mine that “you kind of have to go through challenging times to grow and develop as a person”.

In both the adversity and vegetable situations, words have never been so true. But while looking back and acknowledging the difficult times we’ve gone through is crucial, the most important thing in life is what happens next. So now, for both the college and each one of you, young men, is a time to reset and prepare for the future ahead. But why is being together so great? Well, there’s an old saying – *Many hands make light work* – the more people that get involved and help one another out, the more we can achieve together and the better young men we become.

This morning, you have heard the many ideas and goals that the leadership team and I will aim to achieve during our final year at the college, but the theme for next year still remains a mystery. The touchstone for 2021 is Justice and Solidarity, which embodies the qualities of teamwork, courage, determination, commitment, and above all else, respect for one another.

The leadership team and I have decided that the theme for next year is **BETTER TOGETHER.**

These two words may seem a little ambiguous, however, a ship sailing the high seas has never failed to be a good analogy

A ship needs its crew like a school needs its students - for company, companionship, and comradery. There are hundreds of people manning the ship and everyone has a job to do and must get involved in order to prepare and maintain a seaworthy vessel. But without each crewmember, the ship cannot function. There will be times where the sea is rough and stormy, and the ship looks as if it's going to sink. It's times like these where encouraging and supporting your mates and getting involved together has never been so vital – and remember: *a smooth sea never made a good sailor.*

So, whether that be on the field, up on stage or in the classroom – I put the challenge to you: to motivate your mates and all get involved in every aspect of the college. Because not only will getting involved make Pius **BETTER TOGETHER**, but the more you put in, the more you'll get out.

As we set sail for the year ahead, the leaders elect for 2021, as well as all these fine gentlemen that are sitting before me, will build on the foundations set by the past student leaders of the college to create a positive, safe and enjoyable learning environment in a school where you can be proud to say you come from. The example of perseverance and determination displayed by the student leaders of 2020 will be carried on into next year through the work that we're aiming to do around our theme **BETTER TOGETHER.**

And to the class of 2021, I'm really excited to work with you all. We've been told many times that we are such a cohesive, united and passionate year group and now is the time for us to show that we really are. Many of us have been here at the college since the time where the Big Tree still stood proudly in the centre of the yard and we were small enough to fit into our own bags. But being that little and looking up at the giants we called white shirts was one of the most intimidating things as a new year 5 student. So, no more mucking around in class, no more untucked shirts or top buttons undone, and *no more sending handballs into orbit ...*

Because, we are now those giants in the white shirts, and with great power comes great responsibility. The words of Spiderman help set out a mantra for all of us to follow as leaders of the college. However, I have no doubts that everyone is capable of setting a positive example to, not only the boys in the younger years, but to the teachers, our families and the wider school community.

As we move forward into the uncertain future that lies ahead, I want you all, from years 5 to 11, to have faith in us, the year 12s of 2021, that we will guide you through the next 12 months with confidence, courage and perseverance. We've already seen how, in life, you can be thrown a curve ball that catches you completely off guard, but if we all work together, we can face any obstacle that may be thrown our way. So, whilst we will continue to look into the future in the hope that we can show how St Pius is **BETTER TOGETHER**, we will move forward into each day – one step at a time – focusing on what is happening now – but as Master Oogway once said: *“Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, but today is a gift. That is why it is called the present”*.

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Thank you.

If I could now ask the student leaders to please join me up the front and invite the year 12 cohort for 2021 to please stand as we say our leader's pledge: