



HEAD OF YEAR 9

Newsletter

TARA NORTON

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to Year 9. I genuinely hope that the holiday break has been a restful and happy one for all our families. As a new member of this outstanding School, I am most looking forward to meeting every young person and their family and learning about their greatest strengths. As Head of Year, I will be championing every young person; advocating for their holistic success, building authentic connections and maintaining the high expectations that The Gap State High School strives for. Year 9 is an incredibly important year as the students will find themselves in the unique position of leading by example for younger students, while looking ahead to the senior years for inspiration. I encourage every Year 9 young person to challenge themselves, exceed their expectations and feel a strong sense of belonging amongst their peers. Above all, we are learners who flourish.

Important Events

What day do I wear my Sports Uniform?

9A – HPE/EVP - Roberts	Tuesday	Friday
9B – HPE - White	Tuesday	Friday
9C – APP - McIntosh	Tuesday	Thursday
9D – APP - Amery	Tuesday	Thursday
9E – HPE - Woodill	Monday	Wednesday
9F- HPE - Maclean	Monday	Tuesday
9G – APP - Probst	Monday	Tuesday
9H – APP - Amery	Monday	Tuesday
9I – APP - Reiner	Wednesday	Thursday
9J – HPE - Woodill	Wednesday	Friday
9K- HPE - Sully	Thursday	Friday

Week 1 – Thursday 29 Jan School Photos

Week 3 – Tuesday 10 Feb House Swimming Carnival

Week 5 – House week – activities all week

Week 8 – Naplan – more information to come

Our Values

At The Gap SHS we are learners who flourish. Our four values; Paying it Forward, Thinking Big, Stepping up and Being Kind not only supports academic and personal growth but also nurtures a culture of positivity, engagement, and resilience across the school community.



HEAD OF YEAR 9

Newsletter

TARA NORTON



This term our focus is **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 in Year 9:

- Helping others without being asked and supporting the wellbeing of others.
- 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 the achievements of others
- Taking pride in caring for our shared spaces.

Living Our Values This Term

Paying It Forward

Focus on:

- Collective responsibility – at The Gap SHS we are all responsible for the community we are building. Together we will share learning, experiences and social activities, and Year 9's will be responsible for supporting each other to exceed expectations.

Stepping Up

Focus on:

- Routine and organisation – Begin by getting the little things right and the big things will look after themselves. I am excited to see how effectively the Year 9's will help each other to be on time to every class, every day.

Thinking Big

Focus on:

- GEM principles – Gratitude, empathy and mindfulness helps us all when we feel as though our day might not be going as well as we hoped. Focusing on what we do have or can do well is great way to think if we are feeling a little worried about the day to come.



HEAD OF YEAR 9

Newsletter

TARA NORTON

Being Kind

Focus on:

- Inclusion and belonging – we all want to feel like we belong to a place that sees us. I challenge the Year 9's to show our school how we support each other, include everyone in our classes and create a real sense of connectedness in our group.

Connect and Wellbeing Focus

Why Connect matters right now

Connect is a dedicated time each week designed to foster strong, supportive relationships between students and their teachers. We believe in going beyond the traditional academic curriculum. Our goal is to empower students to leave our schooling environment with life skills, vitality, purpose, self-awareness and a strong connection to the world around them. Connect is a vital component of our School life and as such every student is expected to engage and contribute to every session with an open mind. In Term 1 the focus is on GEM in action – practicing and learning the daily habits of mind that build resilience and grit.



Our School has partnered with The Resilience Project ensuring that every student receives the support they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Home and School in Partnership

Clear routines help our students feel calm, confident, and ready to learn. When families and school work together around late arrivals and early departures, we minimise disruption and maximise learning time for everyone.



HEAD OF YEAR 9

Newsletter

TARA NORTON

Learners *who* Flourish

Late Arrival

- 1 Parent / guardian must call or SMS**
Please notify at least 10-15 minutes prior with students name, connect class and reason
- 2 Student MUST sign in at the Office**
When you arrive sign in at Lower Administration to receive slip to provide to classroom teacher

Early Departure

- 1 Parent / guardian must call or SMS**
Parent to notify the office at the beginning of the day
- 2 Student to collect a LEAVE REQUEST**
Students can collect a leave request before school or at breaks.
- 3 Student to collect LEAVE PASS**
Students can collect a pass at the time of departure from Lower Administration.

Thank you for helping students start and finish their day smoothly by following our simple office sign-in and leave pass processes. Your support makes a real difference to student wellbeing and classroom focus.

After long holidays, we know it can be hard to break habits — particularly around mobile phone use. Clear and consistent expectations help students reset routines and refocus on learning.



HEAD OF YEAR 9

Newsletter

TARA NORTON



In line with the Queensland Government Away for the Day policy, mobile phones and wearable devices are required to be switched off and stored away for the duration of the school day. Our staged non-compliance process is designed to be educational, supportive and predictable, helping students build responsibility and healthier technology habits.

If students or parents require further support during this transition, please contact myself or the Guidance Officer - we're here to help.

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.



HEAD OF YEAR 9

Newsletter

TARA NORTON

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"

If

you have any questions, concerns, or would like further information, please don't hesitate to contact me or any member of the Year 9 team listed below. As always, early communication is



HEAD OF YEAR 9

Newsletter

TARA NORTON

encouraged - all matters are important to us, and working together allows us to best support your young person to flourish at The Gap SHS.

Staff Member	Role	
Tara Norton	Head of Year	General Year Level Support
Sarah Toomey	Guidance Officer	Social and Emotional Wellbeing Support
Georgia Simmonds	Head of Pathways and Performance	Academic Support
James Gleeson	Deputy Principal	Year Level Oversight
Mariana Ryan	Student Support Coordinator	Year Level Oversight

A Note of Encouragement

Year 9 is an exciting time in a young person's life, full of so much growth and opportunity! I am honoured to be part of your young person's life journey this year and I am grateful for the support you will share with your child and our School. Please don't hesitate to get in touch for any reason. I look forward to chatting with you soon.