



HEAD OF YEAR 8 *Newsletter*

Josh Connolly

Term 3 Focus: ***Stepping Up***

Dear Parents and Carers – Can you believe we are halfway through year 8!

Welcome back to Term 3 – we hope you and your family had a restful break and are feeling recharged for the term ahead.



Helping Your Child Aim for *Their* Best

There can be a lot of pressure on young people to always be the *best* – whether that's coming from themselves, from school, from society or even from parents and carers. But the truth is, "the best" looks different for everyone.

As we move through the middle years of high school, one of the most important things we can do is help our young people aim for *their* best – not someone else's version of success.

Over the next few weeks, it might be a great chance to have some relaxed chats with your child about what *their* best looks like. Here are a few ideas you might want to try together to support their wellbeing and sense of direction:

- **Talk about goals:**
Ask them what their big dream is for the end of school. Then chat about what success could look like even if that goal changes, and how they'd cope if things don't go as planned. What would their worst-case scenario be? Work together to come up with a plan for how your family would support them in each of these situations – and make sure to include how you'll celebrate the little wins along the way.
- **Create a balanced weekly plan:**
Help them make a simple schedule that includes time for study, time to relax, and time with family. You could even build in some time each week to check in with each other – nothing formal, just an open space to chat honestly about what's going well or what's tough at the moment.
- **Tidy up and reset:**
Spend a bit of time helping them reorganise their study space. That could mean clearing out old notebooks, refilling their pencil case, or just making their desk feel like a space they enjoy working in. A fresh start can go a long way in boosting motivation!

Most importantly, keep reminding your young person that this stage of life is all about learning who they are and how they want to move through the world. They'll still need your support, your guidance, and your boundaries – but they also need to feel like they're in the driver's seat at times.

Let's keep working together to help our Year 8s grow into confident, capable young people – one step at a time.



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Uniform

A reminder that any issues with uniform can be sorted at the Uniform Room before school in E03 between 8:10 and 8:35AM. Should there be a medical condition that requires a different uniform item to be worn, please forward a medical certificate to jconn280@eq.edu.au with any extra details we need to be aware of. For all other concerns, students will be provided with uniform items for the day. No parent notes are required for this support to be accessed.

STYMIE

- At The Gap State High School, we are committed to fostering a safe and supportive environment for all students. That's why we are proud to be a Stymie School!
- What is Stymie? Stymie is an anonymous online reporting tool that empowers students to speak up about concerns such as bullying, mental health challenges, or the safety of themselves and others—without fear. It helps build a culture of care, kindness, and support within our school community.
- Your feelings matter. Your happiness matters. Your voice matters. Your safety matters. Your story matters. Every single day. For more info visit: <https://about.stymie.com.au/>



Managing Screen Time in Modern Families

New research from the University of Queensland has highlighted the challenge families face in keeping children within recommended screen-time limits—especially when kids span different age groups. Only 23% of families with children in multiple age brackets are meeting the national guidelines. Experts are calling for more realistic, supportive resources to help parents balance screen use in today's tech-filled world.



Article Link: <https://thegapshs.eq.schooltv.me/newsletter-article/12859/12802>



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CONNECT

This term in Year 8, our Connect theme is **Stepping Up**.



For our Year 8s, this focus is all about starting to take more ownership of their actions, stepping outside their comfort zones, and looking for ways to support the people and community around them. It's a chance for students to realise that leadership doesn't always mean a badge – it often shows up in the little things we do each day to help others and make positive choices.

In **Weeks 6–10**, Connect lessons will guide students through the process of designing a **Year 8-led Service Project**. The goal is for the cohort to work together on something that benefits the community and encourages kindness, teamwork, and responsibility.

You might like to continue this theme at home by encouraging your child to step up in simple, everyday ways, such as:

- Helping out with extra jobs around the house
- Supporting younger siblings or family members with homework or chores
- Wearing their uniform with pride and representing the school well
- Doing something kind for a neighbour or friend – even a simple check-in

Student Celebrations

In term 3 assemblies, we'll also be taking time to celebrate the positive actions our students take each day. If your young person has recently gone above and beyond or demonstrated what it means to *step up*, please feel free to get in touch with me – we'd love to recognise their efforts at school.



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Personal News

On a personal note, I wanted to let you all know that I will be stepping into a new position at another school for the next six months. Rex Bertrand will be taking over from the start of Term 3. Rex is a fantastic operator, and I'm confident he will continue to guide the Year 8s positively on their high school journey.

Thank you all for your support and partnership so far — I look forward to hearing how the second half of Year 8 unfolds for this great cohort.

To contact Rex Bertrand, please email headofyear8@thegapshs.eq.edu.au.