



HEAD OF YEAR 9

Newsletter

Ruth Donovan

TERM 4: THINKING BIG

Dear Parents and Carers,

It's so wonderful to be starting our final Term of Year 9! I feel like it was just yesterday that we were meeting for the first time at our whole school assembly and now, I enjoy the most fun, engaging and thoughtful conversations with your teenagers on a daily basis. As we know, Term 4 can just fly by so it's important we are setting our young people up for a successful term ahead. Take some time to remind them that our Interim reports are just an 'moment in time' and that we always have opportunity here at school to change the narrative of our academic and social experiences. Encourage them to 'Think Big' about the term ahead and to set some time-sensitive goals that address the areas they are hoping to improve the most here at school. I love hearing what these goals are for the term and will look forward to spending some more time with the students at break to hear about these.

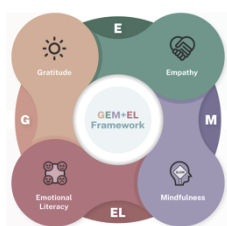
Wishing you all a wonderful Term 4 and I am looking forward to sending you some more updates soon on our Boat Cruise Celebration!



YEAR 9 UPDATES

GEM Focus

Gratitude



In Connect this term, students will be learning about Gratitude. Practising gratitude is the ability to notice things in your life and around you (big and small) and appreciate them, rather than thinking about the things you wish you had or might be missing out on. Making this a daily habit rewires your brain to scan the world for the positives rather than default to our negative bias. Over time, this leads to increased levels of energy, happiness, and self-esteem.

On the next page is a fantastic section of a 'take it home' activity from a part of the Gratitude curriculum within The Resilience Project. Practicing Gratitude as a family can really support your teenager to create positive pathways in their brain and feel more energetic and positive about their days.

Year 9 Boat Cruise



We are now starting to get prepared for our Boat Cruise on the 4th of December – Week 9, Term 4. Cameron Drew (Year 9 Deputy Principal) and I will be monitoring student engagement with School over the next few weeks. As it is a special event, where there are ongoing concerns with no improvements in engagement, students will be supported to improve their engagement so they are able to attend this event.

Make sure you also check your school fees are up to date as unpaid accounts may cause the finance team to put a hold on your student's invitation to the event. Special situations are taken into account by the finance team. Please ensure that if you have questions about this you reach out to accounts at: Accounts@thegapshs.eq.edu.au



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TRY IT AT HOME FAMILY ACTIVITY: **GRATITUDE WALL** (PHYSICAL OR DIGITAL)

YOU WILL NEED:

- Time together as a family.
- Technology/devices (optional).

WHAT TO DO:

- Creating a visual representation of all the things you are grateful for is a great way to help you remember how lucky you are, and create a family habit of gratitude.
- Get together as a family. This may be after dinner or just sitting together in the living room.
- Discuss ways you could visually create a gratitude wall, either physically or digitally.
- Ideas include:
 - » Making a family digital collage together that you can all use as your screen saver on phones, computers, iPads etc.
 - » Start a family gratitude journal where everyone can write and paste pictures of things they are grateful for throughout the year. At the end of the year you can look back on the journal together.
 - » Start a gratitude jar. Each night, family members have to write something that went well for them on a strip of paper and place into the gratitude jar. Once a week, get together to read out the papers and family members can try to guess who wrote which ones.
 - » Create a family gratitude movie/photo show using pictures of things you are all grateful for and some of your favourite music (might need to compromise here!).
- Spend time creating it as a family, chatting about ideas as you build.

Family Gratitude habit builder:

Every night at dinner, have each person describe the favourite part of their day and explain why.



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BUILDING SOCIAL RESILIENCE AND CONFIDENCE IN OUR ADOLESCENTS

Being a teenager is hard work at times. It is important students understand that behaviours and social interactions throughout their lives – not just in high school – can be a tricky thing to navigate. Additionally, teenagers need modelling and coaching on how to react to these issues. Should your child come home from school upset about some behaviour or social breakdown at school, it's important that you model for them appropriate ways to interact with others. Below are some tips for having these conversations with your child.

1. Keep calm



You are your teenager's biggest fan – this is very important and something we value immensely – however, it's imperative that you don't react physically or emotively when your child is discussing an issue with you. Actively listen to them debrief while trying to find the key points they are identifying. Be sure to remember that this is your adolescent's truth. Their emotions and feelings are valid and important. It is also important to remember there is always more than one side to a story. Remain calm, ensure your child talks out their feelings and try to guide them to focus on a positive by the end of the conversation.

2. Discuss their actions



Ask your teenager what their role has been in this social/behavioural breakdown. Encourage honesty and remind them that no matter what they tell you, you will support them to move forward, even if it turns out they've made some choices that do not align with their personal values/qualities. Try not to point fingers at others and focus instead on helping your child to see both sides of the story. It's also useful to let them know they're not alone and they're not the only teenager who has had to face this before! Sharing stories of how you've overcome losing friendships or how you've approached building new relationships is a great way to help your teenager contextualise the issues.

3. Ask who they spoke to at school



If it is a physical issue, a perceived threat or some other issue where your adolescent feels harmed, we expect them to report it to us so we can swiftly assess the problem. If your teenager is only speaking to you, this will actually escalate the issue for them and can create more problems. Encourage them to speak with an adult at school they trust as soon as an incident occurs. It's important we are helping our children to develop skills and strategies to solve their own problems. An important part of high school is becoming more responsible and learning how to adapt to the challenges life will throw at us once we're outside the schooling environment.



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4. Create a 'check-in' date with your child accompanied by some goals



Create a time with your child for the following week to check in and set some goals for them should any further issues arise. Set goals that focus on positive outcomes and encourage them to find pro-social ways to problem solve issues.

If you would like to do some further reading or to explore some other tips regarding supporting your teenager socially, the below articles have some great, evidence-informed advice.

<https://parents.au.reachout.com/first-nations-parents-and-carers/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-families/how-to-talk-to-your-child-about-social-and-emotional-wellbeing-sewb>

Article by 'ReachOut' in partnership with Cox Inall Ridgeway using the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework (SEWB) which address the importance of understanding the different ways First Nations Australians experience and approach SEWB.

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/adhd/social-emotional-wellbeing/adhd-friendships/friends-friendships-teenagers-adhd>

Article by 'Raising children' regarding specific strategies for teenagers with ADHD.

<https://theconversation.com/adolescence-can-be-awkward-heres-how-parents-can-help-their-child-make-and-maintain-good-friendships-107362>

Article by Dr Michael Chambers – Australian Catholic University

<https://www.hcfpsychology.com.au/blog/helping-teens-thrive>

Article by Harrison Child & Family Psychology

<https://thegapshs.eq.schooltv.me/newsletter/friendship-belonging>

Overviews and links to articles, podcasts and resources compiled by Dr Michael Carr-Gregg

REMINDERS



Away for the Day: Mobile phones and devices are away for the day. Students need to head to the office and hand them in if they choose to use them as directed by staff. Repeated referral to the office will mean myself or Cameron Drew (Deputy Principal) will follow through with further supports.



Sports Uniform Day: A reminder that our sports uniform days may have changed this term. Please ensure your student checks the schedule below for when they are able to wear their sports uniform to school.

APP9A: Monday & Tuesday
APP9B: Monday & Wednesday
HPE9C: Tuesday & Wednesday
HPE9D: Tuesday & Wednesday
APP9E: Monday & Tuesday
APP9F: Monday & Tuesday

HPE9G: Tuesday & Wednesday
HPE9H: Tuesday & Wednesday
HPE9I: Tuesday & Thursday
HPE9J: Tuesday & Thursday
APP9K: Tuesday & Thursday



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Wellbeing Support: As always, we are here to support your student. Our support team can provide a variety of supports to your student as they are working towards achieving their best in their subjects. Below you will find a reminder about key staff they can reach out to for help with assignment understanding, assessment scheduling, wellbeing and mental health, and other general supports.

Please encourage your teenager to reach out for support. Sharing stories with them of when you have had success with receiving support to improve your own work or mental health can help to reduce stigma and empower them to feel safe in speaking to one of us here at school.

KEY SUPPORT STAFF

Staff Member	Role	
Ruth Donovan	Head of Year	General Year Level Support
Kelsea Thompson	Guidance Officer	Social and Emotional Wellbeing Support
Georgia Simmonds	Head of Pathways and Performance	Academic Support
Cameron Drew	Deputy Principal	Year Level Oversight

DATE CLAIMERS

Week 1 – Project Rock IT – Wednesday, 8th of October

REWRITE is a powerful development opportunity for our students to develop literacy and understand how they can take action on diversity, prejudice, discrimination and unconscious bias.

Week 1 – Mental Health Week – All Week

Mental Health Week focuses on promoting mental health and wellbeing for individuals and communities. The initiative aims to challenge stigma, encourage conversations about mental health, and highlight the importance of self-care, community connection, and seeking help when needed.

Week 1 – Battle of the Bands – Friday, 10th of October

Week 3 – Be Challenged – Wednesday, 22nd of October

Students will engage in a day of activities designed to challenge their thinking, develop team-work skills and overcome challenges using problem solving skills. This day is a fantastic opportunity to support students in developing real life skills.

Week 5 – Year 9 Gala Day – Tuesday, 4th of November

Week 6 – Remembrance Day – Tuesday, 11th of November

Week 6 – TULA Concert – Friday, 14th of November



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Week 8 – Year 9 Accelerated Music Concert – Monday, 24th of November

Come along and support the amazing work of our Year 9 students at 6:30pm in the Auditorium as they celebrate their year of learning.

Week 9 – Year 9 Boat Cruise – Thursday, 4th of December

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me if there is anything I can do to support your teenager.

Kind regards,

Ruth Donovan
Head of Year 9