

30th January, 2023

Dear Families,

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you all to the 2023 Gisborne Secondary College School year! While I thoroughly enjoyed my time off, I'm excited to getting back into another school year, and I hope our students are all looking forward to their return as well.

Our staff have spent the first two days of school engaging in planning and preparation sessions and are highly anticipating the return of students this week.

I am very hopeful that 2023 will be a year in which our students can focus on their learning and engage with their peers, teachers and other staff in a meaningful way.

This letter contains some important 'nuts and bolts' information about the year ahead. All the information in this letter will be communicated to students through year level assemblies that will be running this week, in order to establish positive and consistent routines.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones have been banned for all students at Victorian state primary and secondary schools since Term 1 2020, to help reduce distraction, tackle cyber bullying and improve learning outcomes for students. Teachers at the school have reported that when the distraction of mobile phones is removed students are more focused during class and communicating more in the school yard. Students will be required to switch off their phones and store them securely in lockers from the start of the school day until the final bell. When emergencies occur, parents or guardians can reach their child by calling the school.

The only exceptions to the ban will be where students use phones to monitor health conditions, or where teachers instruct students to bring their phone for a particular classroom activity. At all other times phones must be in lockers. Phone exemptions are provided through the Wellbeing Team.

Link to school policy <https://gisbornesc.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Mobile-phones-policy.pdf>

If a student is seen with their mobile phone, they will be asked to hand it in to the respective sub-school office. If they refuse to do this then the follow up will be in line with refusing to follow a teacher instruction.

It is important to note that the mobile phone ban includes the canteen. Phones must not be used for payment at the canteen, so students need to ensure they have either cash or card for payment.

On time to class

Gisborne Secondary College believes all students should attend school all day, every day when the school is open for instruction and is committed to working with its school community to encourage and support full school attendance. A corner stone of this practice is marking rolls on time ensuring students are accounted for promptly in the learning area they should be each and every period. There are processes in place to record, monitor and follow up students who do not attend class or are significantly late. We ask parents support this by communicate with the relevant staff at Gisborne Secondary College about any issues affecting their child's attendance and provide a reasonable explanation for their child's absence from school in a timely manner.

Link to school policy <https://gisbornesc.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Attendance-policy.pdf>

Dress code

The School Council has developed a dress code that we believe provides a range of comfortable choices for students and is cost effective for families. Students are expected to comply with this Student Dress Code while traveling to and from school, during school hours and when attending school activities. Students wearing non-approved uniform items may be asked to remove the item or change into a compliant item of clothing provided by the school. It is important that students have suitable shoes (hard leather upper) for technology classes, as they will not be able to participate in practical sessions if they do not have suitable shoes, due to OHS requirements.

All information regarding our uniform can be found on our website at <https://gisbornesc.vic.edu.au/uniform/>. In 2023, we will be working with both our Student Representative Council, and School Council to review and adjust our policy, to ensure that our uniform is one that students feel comfortable wearing, and one that represents our school community.

Student who are going to be temporarily out of uniform must bring a parent note to school and see their sub-school for a uniform pass.

Any families experiencing financial hardship are encouraged to contact the school, and we will work to support you to get your children into uniform. We understand that uniform can take some time to arrange, and as such, there will be a two week period before our uniform rules are enforced. All students are expected to be in approved uniform by Monday Feb 13th.

Uniform items can be purchased directly from Beleza School Uniforms Gisborne
42C Aitken Street, Gisborne or <https://store.beleza.com.au/>

School Wide Positive Behaviours

In 2023, we will be beginning our work as a 'School Wide Positive Behaviour' School (SWPBS). SWPBS is an evidence-based framework for schools that looks at behaviour and learning from a whole-school approach. Opportunities for learning and achievement for all students will increase if:

- The school environment is positive and supportive
- Expectations are consistently clear
- Students are consistently taught expected behaviours
- Expected behaviours are consistently responded to in a fair and equitable way.

We, as a college, are excited to be taking on this work, and firmly believe that it will further develop our school community as a positive, engaging and safe place for our students.

As part of this process, we will be launching the GSC Merit system as of the first day of school!

This process aims to encourage, promote, and recognise the outstanding behaviour and achievements of students in our school community. Students will be awarded merit points based on our school values, that will ultimately lead to reward for earning merits. Student voice will be crucial to the success of this initiative, and as such, we will be working with students across Term 1, to identify appropriate incentives and ways of recognising student merits.

We will be releasing a short 'Welcome Back' edition of our Newsletter this week, which will contain further important information regarding the school year. Please ensure you take the time to read the newsletter when it is sent out as it is the way that the school will communicate important information to families.

I look forward to working in partnership with parents and carers this year, to support our students to be happy, successful and engaged members of our school community.

Kind Regards,



Sarah Rose
College Principal