



NEWSLETTER | 2023 EDITION 1 | THURSDAY 2 MARCH

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE MRS RACHEL CUTAJAR



Dear Parents, Guardians and Students,

Welcome to the Week 6 Term 1 Newsletter for Merrimac High. We hope that you are all doing well and are enjoying the new academic year.

Student Achievements:

Congratulations to all the students who participated in the recent Interschool Swim Carnival. It was a great event and we are very proud of all the efforts put in by our students. Congratulations to our House Captains and Staff who generated so much energy and enthusiasm on the day.

Welcome Year 7 Students:

We extend a warm welcome to our Year 7 students who have just started their secondary school journey with us. We hope that you are settling in well and enjoying your classes. Don't forget to make the most of the opportunities available to you and get involved in extracurricular activities such as Mr Ortado's Choir and Homework Club in the library.

The Value of Response to Intervention:

As part of our commitment to ensuring every student reaches their potential, our school employs the Response to Intervention (RTI) model. This model involves identifying students who may be struggling academically or require extension and provides targeted interventions to support their learning. We believe that all students can learn and, with the right support, every student can succeed. Your student receives RTI support each Wednesday.

Interschool Sport:

We are excited to announce that our school will be participating in a range of interschool sporting competitions this year against our fellow schools in the spirit of healthy competition. This is a great opportunity for our students to represent our school and demonstrate their sporting abilities. We encourage all students to get involved in the upcoming events and show their support for their fellow classmates.

Year 12 Induction and School Captains:

We would like to congratulate our Year 12 students on their recent induction and our school captains on their leadership roles. We have no doubt that they will excel in their roles and help to make this academic year a great success.

NAPLAN Dates:

Finally, a reminder that NAPLAN testing is scheduled for later this term (not Term 2). We encourage all students to participate and prepare themselves for these assessments, which are an important part of the school's academic program. Please note this year ALL NAPLAN tests are delivered online and students will be required to bring their device. Please ensure that your child is well-rested and prepared for these tests.

All Year 7 and 9 students throughout Australia will soon be completing the NAPLAN Online (National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy) testing. These tests will be held on 15-23 March 2023.

Year 7 NAPLAN – M Block

Wednesday 15 March	Thursday 16 March	Monday 20 March	Tuesday 21 March	Thursday 23 March
Year 7 Writing 42min – Period 1 9:00 – 10:20am	Year 7 Reading 65min – Period 1 9:00 – 10:20am	Year 7 COL 45min – Period 1 9:00 – 10:20am	Year 7 Numeracy 65min – Period 1 9:00 – 10:20am	CATCH UP TESTS -All Day

Year 9 NAPLAN – M Block

Wednesday 15 March	Friday 17 March	Monday 20 March	Wednesday 22 March	Thursday 23 March
Year 9 Writing 42min – Period 2 10:20 – 11:25am	Year 9 Reading 65min – Period 1 9:00 – 10:20am	Year 9 COL 45min – Period 2 10:20 – 11:25am	Year 9 Numeracy 65min – Period 1 9:00 – 10:20am	CATCH UP TESTS – All Day

You can assist your child to perform their very best by ensuring they have a good night's sleep and eat breakfast prior to testing, and that they bring the necessary equipment comprising:

- Charged Laptop with NAP Lockdown Browser installed
- Headphones (No wireless earphones permitted)
- 2 x 2B or HB pencils
- Pencil sharpener
- Eraser

Best regards,

Rachel Cutajar
Principal



FROM THE DEPUTY'S DESK

Welcome all our new families to the Merrimac community. It was a fantastic start to the school year, with all our Year 7 students looking sensational in their new uniforms. It was wonderful to see how many parents turned up to celebrate their students' first day at high school with them.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all the new Year 7 parents to our Merrimac school community, as well as all those new parents in the other year levels. A big welcome back also to all our continuing students and caregivers. I would particularly like to ask Year 7 parents to continue that same high level of interest that was demonstrated on the first day of school. I know that as students enter into adolescence there is sometimes a belief that their student doesn't want the same level of parent involvement in their school life. However, we are a very supportive community and strongly believe that by parents and the school working closely together as a team, great things can be achieved.

The school also has a strong belief that student well-being is of the utmost importance which is reflected in our pastoral

care structure and programs. There is a Head of Department overseeing student well-being and engagement and there are 6 student Deans. Parents are strongly encouraged to contact the appropriate Dean with any concerns or queries. Our Deans are as follows:

Year 7: Sam Mulcahy
Year 8: Chris Redler
Year 9: Anna Flynn
Year 10: Geetika Sodhi
Year 11: Daniel Hodgetts
and Year 12: Asha Cameron

On Monday 13 February, we welcomed parents and the community into the school. Year 7 parents had an opportunity to see 'behind the scenes' and experience life as a junior secondary student. Prospective future students and their parents were also welcomed in for an open day and were able to have a personalised school tour and be immersed in a variety of learning experience. There was a wide range of events on offer – from Lion dancing to programming robots to the use of lures and casting or solving a crime forensically and the evening was widely attended.

Regards,

Susan Bell
Deputy Principal Year 9 & 10

SPORT

The beginning for the school year is always an exciting phase, and particularly within the HPE faculty. Our sporting calendar began with the 2023 Merrimac SHS swimming carnival with students already representing our school at the Oceanic District swimming championships held at Somerset College. Many students have also collected trial information for sport specific representation, and we wish all students the best of luck starting their representative journey's. Students are encouraged to pay attention to the student notices in the weeks ahead so not to miss out on their upcoming sport trial.





The most exciting development for 2023 is our re-introduction into the interschool sport competition. We are part of the 'GC6' competition where we will compete in friendly competition against PBC SHS, Elanora State High School, Robina State High School, Benowa State High School, and St Michael's College. The first round of competition is Wednesday 1st March. Our new sport coordinator, Mr Borg, will have detailed operational instructions sent out to all students on how the day will progress. Please encourage your child to monitor their school email account so they know where to go. We wish all our students the greatest of starts to the 2023 school year, and go team Merrimac in Round 1 of our GC6 Interschool Sport Competition!

Junior Sport Summit students by the end of this term have:

Year 7- Learn to Surf experience

Year 8- diving instruction at Gold Coast Aquatic Centre

Year 9- 4 day / 3 night camp at Maroon Outdoor Education Centre

JUNIOR SECONDARY

Year 8 Future Champs:

The PCYC CHAMP (Channeling Healthy Aggression Mentoring Project) program has targeted Year 8 boys in Term 1. On Wednesdays, 10 boys spend 2 hours at the local PCYC gym. The program provides positive role models to work alongside young people to improve their life choices, using boxing as a vehicle to foster personal growth, create a positive and supportive relationship between participants and their mentors, (including Police Officers), and improve relationships with local schools and communities. The QPS officers have said that this group of young boys has been one of the best groups they have worked with.



Music:

Our instrumental music program continues to provide students with expert tuition in concert band, stage band and strings ensemble. Lessons and ensemble rehearsals have already started with a bang as new students and mentors eagerly get back into preparation for upcoming performance opportunities and eisteddfod competitions.



Drama:

What an exciting start to the year in the Drama classroom as our Year 8 class started to explore Collage Drama and the importance of educating an audience about relevant issues. Students have worked well demonstrating great teamwork and collaboration as they have begun using script extracts, multimedia and freeze frames to bring stories to life.





Media:

The Year 7 Media Arts students were in full swing during their first week in their elected subject. They got hands on with the camera, understanding how to assemble, take pictures and disassemble, ready for use in the next class. They understood Safety on Set and what it looks like to be a learner that is ready for action in The Arts! Now we are onto creating SFX for a movie trailer.



Dance:

Our Open afternoon allowed the new members of our Dance Summit team to showcase their amazing talents as the Year 7 students performed a musical theatre scene and routine from the highly acclaimed musical "Matilda". Performing to a jam-packed theatre, the audience of over 300 people were very impressed at the calibre of our Dance Summit students.



Humanities:

A great start to 2023 so far with many students being involved in a variety of hands on activities namely; Year 8 SOSE classes creating medieval castles as an introduction to their Medieval Europe unit, Legal Studies have been undercover detectives solving a murder mystery, junior Philosophy classes have been deciding YES or NO to new products they cannot live without.

Our motto for the faculty is “we set the foundations for your student’s future” our subjects actively teach student’s lifelong skills in the subject areas we offer. They are:

- Legal Studies
- Geography
- History
- Social and Community Studies
- Tourism
- Philosophy and Reason
- Economics
- Business



MIDDLE SECONDARY

Art:

Visual Art students have been busily making artworks reflecting on culture, character, self-awareness & environmental issues plus the fundamentals of drawing. Images included are oil pastel drawings from the Year 9 unit ‘Water World’ who will soon move into lino printing. The year 10 students have embraced the impressionist style with their monochromatic self-portraits.



Leadership:

The City of Gold Coast Junior Council is a civic leadership program aimed at Year 10 and 11 students from Gold Coast high schools. Each year, more than 120 students from schools across the Gold Coast take part in the Junior Council Program including our very own Merrimac State High School.

We had two Year 10 representatives, Bella and Curran and two Year 11 representatives, Akasha and Jasmin who went to their first Junior Council meeting with Dean of Year 10, Mrs Sodhi.

The Junior Council is a two-year commitment. The program provides students with the opportunity to actively participate in

their local community, by: developing an understanding of local government; discussing and raising awareness of current, local community issues; developing skills including communication, public speaking, consultation, leadership and program development, and providing a platform to meet new people, have a voice, and exchange ideas through workshops and volunteer opportunities.



SENIOR SECONDARY

Music:

Mrs Losada and School Captain Jenny Gillan captivated our community with a beautiful violin duet during our Open Evening, demonstrating the wonderful music opportunities we have here at Merrimac.



Media:

The Year 11 Media Arts classes had the pleasure of having Danielle Webster – Natural Light Photographer, discuss with the students her organic growth into a very successful wedding photographer. She discussed her humble beginnings, seeking to follow established photographers, to build her own skill. Danielle showed her images, her processes and her gear, to really help the students understand the power of storytelling through photography for their own Gold Coast

subculture folio of work. <https://daniellewebster.photography/>



Art:

The Year 12 students are immersed in their first Body of Work which we are very excited to see displayed in Week 1 of Term 2. Selected artworks from all year levels will be framed and showcased in the school's art gallery for students to view.



Humanities:

Year 12 Geography students conducted their field work on North Stradbroke Island with Miss Snooks, Mr Sosangelis and Mr McMahon, investigating the environmental issues present at Cylinder Beach. Students also enjoyed the daily gelatos and swimming on the trip!





YEAR 11:

The Year 11 cohort have had a busy start to the year participating in School nurse health talks and kicking off the 'Find Ya Feet' program where they have been given tools to tell their own stories.



Aquatics:

In week 10, Year 10 and Year 11 Aquatics students are looking forward to completing their Scuba Diving ticket on campus in the school pool and also heading over to Cook Island.

Student Council:

The Year 11 Student Council leaders raised over \$200 on Valentines Day and will be running an Easter fundraiser in Week 9 and 10. Any student is welcome to join these meetings that are run every Thursday during first break in B3.

Exams:

Fast approaching is the first exam block 14-17 March and students have been given information regarding AARA in the event one needs to be submitted.

YEAR 12:

Week 5 has been full of celebrations of student success! First of which was the Leaders Induction Assembly. Special guest Angie Bell MP – Federal Member for Moncrief provided the Year 10's, 11's and 12's with wise words on Leadership and congratulated the 2023 School Leaders. Her best piece of advice for all was "never underestimate the power of 'yes' because you never know where it will take you."



Wednesday evening, School Captains and Vice Captains and their families attended the Gold Coast Secondary Principal's Alliance Student Leaders Celebration. Along with Principal Cutajar, Deputy Principal Mr Gibbs, HOD – Mr McMahon & Dean – Year 12 Miss Cameron, the leaders learnt about leadership from Gold Medallist Duncan Free (OAM) and Regional Director John Norfolk. This event, also provided our leaders the opportunity to reconnect with other leaders from High Schools all across the Gold Coast.

Thursday evening saw the Year 12's attend their Senior Induction evening. Their families got to witness as the Year 12's received their badges, and embrace their roles as seniors within the Merrimac community. A long standing Merrimac tradition is the lighting of the candle – where the Year 12's make a wish for the coming year. Hopefully come graduation, their wish will have been fulfilled.

Year 11 & Year 12 Exams:

Senior School students in years 11 and 12 will move into exam shutdown periods this term in preparation for success. During exam shutdown periods the all students attend school only to complete scheduled assessments.

Year 11 students will be in exam shutdown in Week 8 from Tuesday 14 March to Friday 17 March inclusive:

Day and Date	AM Session - 9am	PM Session – 12pm
Tuesday 14 March	Chemistry Legal Studies	Aquatic Practices
Wednesday 15 March	Philosophy & Reason Tourism	
Thursday 16 March	Biology Social & Community Studies	
Friday 17 March	Geography	

Year 12 students will be in exam shutdown in Week 10 from Wednesday 29 March to Friday 31 March inclusive:

Day and Date	AM Session - 9am	PM Session – 12pm
Wednesday 29 March	Essential English Literature	Visual Art
Thursday 30 March	Essential Maths Maths Methods	Health
Friday 31 March	General Maths Specialist Maths	Aquatic Practices

P&C ASSOCIATION

We invite parents and caregivers to join our P&C Association. Joining the P&C is a great way to get involved in our school community, keep up-to-date with what's happening around the school, contribute to your child's education and make new friends.

Our P&C Association is a group of volunteers who work together to improve the facilities and opportunities available at the school. By participating in the P&C, you are supporting the school community.

Participating in the P&C gives you an opportunity to share in the school's decision-making processes and shape the school's future. Your support is invaluable and we hope to meet you at our next meeting, which is our AGM for the year on Tuesday 14 March in the school's hospitality centre at 6.30pm.

Our first meeting of the year was on 21 February. It was great to see new faces, and meet some new Year 7 parents who attended the meeting. Thank you to all of those new members who decided to join us.

Upcoming P&C dates:

Term 2:

Tuesday 9 May

Term 3:

Tuesday 11 July

Tuesday 8 August

Term 4:

Tuesday 7 November

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