

From the Headmaster



1st February 2018

Dear Parents

On my recent summer break, I read with some sadness that a 14-year-old female boarding student in a NSW school had taken her life as a result of cyber-bullying. Just this week, a report was released and one of its findings stated that one in five students feel unsafe at school. If your child is one of those children, then such a statistic is of no value to you or your family. As a father and an educator, my view is that no child should come to school in fear of anything.

In light of the above, I thought it timely at the start of a new school year that we take this opportunity to reaffirm the critical importance of wellbeing, and to emphasise the role that our associated Pastoral Care strategies and programmes play in supporting boys and their families at Scotch.

Whilst we aim to develop healthy habits in our boys through our programmes and through the positive culture within the school community, it is sometimes necessary to take extra steps to ensure an individual's on-going wellbeing. When things are not going well, early identification and intervention are crucial, and no concern is too small to raise with our staff. In fact, raising what may be perceived to be a small matter quite often allows us to address something quickly and prevent it from escalating.

We simply want to reiterate to you that, working in partnership with parents, we will follow-up on any concerns that come to our attention. In each of the three sub-schools and in Residential Life, there is a Deputy Head of Administration and Pastoral Care who has direct oversight of the Wellbeing and Pastoral Care programmes within their respective sub-schools. These staff are:

- Junior School: Ms Penny Hooper
- Middle School: Ms Pina Giglia
- Senior School: Mr Peter Burt
- Residential Life (Boarding): Mr Grant Bennett

This is in addition to our chaplains, school psychologists, classroom teachers and, in the case of Senior School, House Heads and, in Residential Life, the Heads of Year. The Director of Student and Staff Wellbeing has strategic oversight at the Executive level to ensure that all programmes and strategies pertaining to Wellbeing and Pastoral Care are a priority, and, notwithstanding the different programmes, that our philosophical approach to this issue is consistent across the whole College. Ultimately, the final responsibility resides with the respective Heads of sub-schools and the Director of Residential Life, who have direct Executive responsibility to the Headmaster. A contact list has been provided as an attachment.

In each of our sub-schools and in Residential Life there are age-appropriate Pastoral Care programmes. You can find out more about these from the respective Deputy Head of Administration and Pastoral staff listed above. The College website is being updated and more information will soon be made available online at the Wellbeing and Pastoral Care page.

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Wellbeing and Pastoral Care

1st February 2018

The goal of our programmes, for both mental and physical wellbeing, is to develop in the boys, multiple self-management and resilience habits and strategies. In line with *Preparing Boys for Life*, we know these skills will serve them well beyond their time at school. I recently saw a quote on a social media post which read:

“Wellbeing does not mean being happy all of the time it is having the social, emotional and physical resources to surf life’s waves”

Our message is very simple: we want to reaffirm that there is nothing more important at Scotch than the wellbeing and pastoral oversight of our boys. We all know that when we have a sense of belonging, feel connected, and when we are valued as a member of the community, then most other things fall into place.

The key is for the school and parents to work in partnership. There may be times when we share differing opinions on some issues. However, our role, is to find the best solution to any issue for the sake of each boy. It is also important for the boys to understand that the School and parents work together to offer them the best possible environment in which to study.

If, at any stage, you have a concern about your son’s wellbeing – for whatever reason – a call to the College as soon as possible can be the most important factor in addressing any matter. It is something we would greatly appreciate.



Dr Alec J O’Connell
Headmaster



Mr James E Hindle
Director of Student and Staff Wellbeing

Attachment: Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Contact List