Principal’s Report

We are off to a positive start in 2015. The vast majority of students have moved back into their learning habits quickly and easily. Our new school plan is in the final stages of development and this will form the blueprint for what will be happening at Swansea High over the next 3 years. The key Strategic Directions and strategies are as follows:

1. Creating stimulating learning environments - To create physical and learning environments that have high expectations, are engaging, personalised, flexible and inclusive and where students and staff gain skills to support their physical and emotional safety.
   - Key Strategies - development of the Quality Teaching Framework, improving the physical appearance of the environment

2. Developing positive partnerships and relationships – Fostering positive relationships within and beyond the school to create peaceful, respectful and productive learning environments. To create partnerships beyond the school that increase networks and support improved opportunities for authentic, real world experiences.
   - Key Strategies – Positive Behaviour for Learning Program, transition programs, extra-curricular opportunities, cultural experiences, communication with parents and the wider community and attendance monitoring through digital roll marking,

3. Promoting individual personal best - Opportunity for success is the right of all students and staff. Tailored learning supports the achievement of personal best and develops self-confidence.
   - Key Strategies - Super 6 Literacy Program, Fantastic 5 Numeracy program, interview processes for all years, refined commendation scheme, assessment to be incorporated in the learning, differentiated programs and individualised learning plans and goals. For staff – support for teachers to gain accreditation in the new Teaching Standards approach.

Although, when printed on a page, these appear simple, the transference of these into strong, embedded and sustainable practices will take all of our efforts over the next three years. It allows us to have clarity about what we are doing and where we are headed. It also allows us to measure our progress and readjust and refine our strategies if needed.

Students, teachers and parents have had input into the development and if you would like to obtain a copy of the draft plan to make comment on, please contact the office and ask for a copy. I would appreciate any further input while we are still in draft form.

Our support programs and extra-curricular opportunities will continue in 2015 with the following programs operating:

- The STRIVE Tutorial centre will be starting in week 5 with our senior students being employed to tutor our younger students. This program is FREE and will operate on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons to allow the best possible access to all students. Students can gain assistance in completing assessments, homework or simply gain assistance to review and consolidate in class learning in a one on one environment. The older students gain experience in a mentoring role and also consolidate their own basic skills through the tutoring process.

- The Music Program will continue with students being offered the opportunity to be part of our music ensemble which meets each Wednesday afternoon; our Rock Band program which brings musicians together to form cohesive bands and the guitar group which meets each Wednesday afternoons. Each of these programs have a cost of $8 - $10 per week.

- Maths Online – the school provides the online maths tutor program to all students free of charge. This program can be accessed from home and can assist students to review their work and have a personal teacher in their home. Students will be given training in how to access this program.

- Duke of Ed – students in years 9, 10 & 11 have the opportunity to engage and participate in a leadership and self-development program incorporating hikes and overnight camps.

- Aboriginal Programs – we are currently negotiating to employ an Aboriginal Support person within the school to assist our teachers who have volunteered to lead various Aboriginal programs in the school including Bro & Sista Speak, Aboriginal Dance, Didgeridoo lessons and other cultural activities as well as assisting to develop our Personalised Learning Plans for our Aboriginal students.

- STARSTRUCK – our students are auditioning over the next few weeks to gain a spot in our Dance Ensembles to participate in the performance.
During 2015 we are also researching different timetable structures to determine whether a change may improve the learning environment at Swansea High. We will also be investigating the use of the Flipped Classroom and the use of Problem Based learning as alternative teaching frameworks in an effort to ensure our students gain the most effective structure for their learning. In future newsletters I will provide more detailed information about these approaches we have gathered and seek your input into the possibility of introducing them to Swansea High.

We are constantly looking for ways to improve – we know we always have things we can do better. I am proud to say that all staff at Swansea High are self-reflective and are prepared to try new things to improve learning outcomes for our students. They are also open to suggestions for improvement. Our focus on the Quality Teaching Framework is all about what teachers need to do to be the best they can be to make a difference for students. If you have any ideas, suggestions or issues that are impacting on your young person please feel free to contact the school to discuss them. At each parent teacher evening there is an opportunity to comment anonymously on school practices and processes. Please avail yourself of this opportunity to provide both positive and negative feedback. Without this we don’t reinforce what we do well and don’t change what we don’t.

I look forward to a productive and positive 2015 working with our whole community to make Swansea high the best we can be!

Robyn Leggatt
Principal

P & C

Just a reminder that P&C meetings have commenced for the year, we meet the first Tuesday of each month and would love to see some new faces.

Deputy Principal

Welcome back to the staff and students of Swansea High School. Welcome to our new students in Year Seven and our other new students in Years 8-12. Welcome also to our new Mathematics teacher, Miss Young. Also a warm welcome back to Miss Blake in TAS returning part time after her injury last year. I am looking forward to working with staff students and parents this year and hope it will be a successful and enjoyable year for all of you.

Dangerous Behaviour at the Gwandalan Turnoff

Students at this bus stop are requested to stay off the road. Handball is a dangerous sport in this area and it has been reported by a member of the public that boys are playing handball where the bus pulls in. They also reported that the ball went across the road and one boy went to retrieve it. Please encourage your children not to participate in this dangerous practice.

Students catching the Busways bus on Wednesday afternoons should also collect and complete a permission to leave site before their bus comes at 3.40 - 3.50. All students without a permission note must stay in the top quad in the area under CCTV.

Senior Boys Uniform

Senior students are the role models for their junior counterparts and it is not acceptable for boys to continually walk around the school in T-shirts and board shorts. This encourages junior boys to follow the trend and this damages the image of the school. My focus this term for uniform is to encourage senior boys to wear their school shirt while on site at Swansea High School. There has been a trend by some students to wear T-shirts to school or will not put their school shirt back on after sport or after playing active games at lunch. Also of concern is the number of seniors wearing coloured board shorts.

Staff are asked to send senior boys who present to class in a T-shirt or coloured board shorts to me. Students with a reasonable excuse or note will be encouraged to wear correct uniform. Consequences as per the schools Welfare and Discipline Policy will apply if students persist in not wearing uniform on a continual basis. Parents will be notified if this is the case.

Off Site

Just a reminder, that the consequence for junior students leaving the school grounds is an after school detention. Only senior students are permitted to leave school in their non-timetabled periods and at lunch and recess.

Senior students who have not filled out a permission note regarding leaving the school site should return it ASAP to their Year Advisor.

In case of emergency it is important that seniors leaving the school always sign in and out through the terminal in the front office.

Health Care Plans

We are currently updating Heath Care Plans. Year Advisors and other members of the learning support will contact you to check over our existing plans. If you believe you child does not have a plan and has an illness or disability please contact the school and ask for the Year Advisor.

I wish everyone a safe and productive term.

Guli Skamperle
Deputy Principal

Maths

Junior (Years 7-10) Assessment

Every student in each academic year will complete a common examination, assignment and numeracy test in each Semester. In addition students will undertake class based assessment which may be any combination of topic tests, assignments, review of student workbook or class participation. All students have received written notification of this assessment policy and have been requested to glue it into their workbooks for future reference (a copy of this may be also found on the school’s web site in the Maths Faculty area).

Of course, all junior students are expected to complete their weekly Moodle numeracy homework. Regular completion will develop a student’s numeracy skills. This homework should take less than 30 minutes a week and may be completed individually or with the assistance of a parent or peer. The emphasis is on completion and improvement will occur over time.
Students now have the opportunity to demonstrate their Mathematics progress in a variety of ways with consistent effort resulting in an improved grade.

Maths Online
Maths Online is a comprehensive Internet based Mathematics tutorial program.

Use of Maths Online is an important way of improving student Mathematics outcomes. So much so that Swansea High has again purchased Maths Online access for the entire school (individual student access is $99/year).

All students have been issued with their Maths Online login details and are regularly encouraged to make regular use of this resource. Why not get your student to login and show you around Maths Online? Better still why don’t you complete a lesson together? But at the very least please encourage your student to use Maths Online.

Please contact your student’s teacher if you require further information regarding Maths Online.

Calculators
It is expected that every student brings a calculator (not a mobile phone) to every Mathematics lesson.

In the case of examinations and tests students must have their own calculator as these cannot be loaned or shared. Students who do not have a calculator will be obviously not doing as well.

A $25 calculator purchased from the school office will meet a student’s needs throughout all of high school.

Over the coming weeks Mathematics teachers will be actively following up students to ensure all have a suitable calculator.

Bruce Eyre
Head Teacher Mathematics

Uniform Shop
The Uniform shop is open Tuesdays 8.30-11.30am and Thursdays 1-4.00pm every week.

Parents and carers can contact the Uniform shop on 0434 285 031 or email swansea@daylightcorp.com.

Phone orders are accepted with credit card payment during the opening hours.

Jacqueline Bugeja
Uniform Shop Coordinator

HSIE
Welcome back to another year at Swansea High School. The HSIE faculty is keen to deliver an exciting year with the biggest changes to our junior curriculum in twenty years, the introduction of the National Curriculum, which started in 2014 with Years 7 and 9 History and continues in 2015 with Years 8 and 10 History.

Our Stage 4 students are busy studying Junior History (Year 7) and Junior Geography (Year 8) and may soon enthral dinner conversations with tales about ancient civilisations or the advantages and disadvantages of globalisation.

A reminder to our Stage 5 students (Years 9 and 10), that they must satisfactorily complete the course in History and Geography in order to meet the expectations of the Record of School Achievement. If they are experiencing difficulties, they should speak to their teacher or myself.

We are pleased to be running Senior Geography for the first time in a few years. Mr Balzer and his class are keen to explore this interesting course and will undertake numerous field trips as part of the course requirements.

The current HSC students are already more than a quarter of the way towards the examinations and the feedback provided by staff indicates that the vast majority are equipping themselves well by adopting a revision program, summarising notes, and thoroughly preparing for their assessment tasks. Congratulations also go to them for this positive work ethic.

Adam Young
Head Teacher HSIE

MUSIC
Welcome to 2015!

Guitar Lessons – Wednesday afternoons
This year we have secured the services again of Mr Kevin O’Hara to tutor guitar on Wednesday afternoons from 2pm to 3pm in small groups (starting this week!!!). Small groups keep the cost very reasonable but places are limited so please contact Mr Rippon to reserve a spot. All levels (beginners to advanced) are welcome. Guitars to play are at the school so all you need is to turn up.

Small Ensemble – Wednesday afternoons
Small Ensemble starts again this week with Mrs Kelsey Scott conducting. If your son or daughter would like to play/learn an instrument see Mr Rippon to get information about instruments available for hire and tuition details.

Parent volunteers needed!! – if your son or daughter starts or is with the small music ensemble we are looking for some parents to help occasionally with transport, book duties etcetera. We will have a band meeting soon so stay tuned for more information. Contact Mr Rippon or Kelsey Scott via the office.

Year 7 Music
Music has begun in full swing for year 7 with Keyboards Introduction. Right hand melodies, finger patterns and beat are the priorities for this term. Students with no music experience at all just need to remember to keep having a go at all work. Experienced musicians need to remember to be patient when working in groups and be prepared to help friends with less experience. Playing music is a skill that will stay with you all your life.

Mark Rippon
Music Teacher
Tutoring

Swansea High School runs an after school tutoring program called STRIVE (for Students That Really Intend to improve). Students from years 10, 11, 12 are offered the opportunity to become a tutor, employed by the school. They undergo an interview process for a tutoring position that will strengthen their basic and interpersonal skills. Other students will be offered FREE tutoring and assistance with assessment tasks and homework. The program operates on Monday 3:30 – 5pm, Tuesday 3:30 – 5pm and Thursday from 3:30 – 4:30pm under the supervision of Mrs Penny Buckley. Students can nominate to tutor or be tutored one or more afternoons per week. This is a great chance for students to get assistance and to STRIVE to be the best they can be.

Penny Buckley
STRIVE Tutoring Supervisor

Off Stage Excursion

On Saturday 31st January Mrs McDavitt and Ms Power took Tayla Hejduk, Taela Phillips and Sharnie Robson to see Offstage: a showcase of exemplary HSC Drama performances from 2014. The performances were outstanding, and it was an excellent opportunity for our students to see the wide range of performances that can receive 100% for their HSC performances. It was an inspiring excursion, and it is exciting to think about what our Swansea Drama students will achieve in the future!

Jane McDavitt
English Teacher

Chaplain

Hello Swansea High Community,

Where has the time gone? Week 3 of Term 1 has come upon us in what seems like no time at all. Welcome back to all our wonderful students, inspiring teachers, invaluable support staff, P&C members, and all from our school community.

As you go about this year, with its ups and downs that are bound to happen, it can be so easy to get bogged down and distracted by all the pressures of life. For students, in particular, the challenges can be intimidating to say the least. I came across a resource in my network last year that I would encourage you to make use of. The website is http://au.reachout.com/, Australia’s leading online youth mental health service, accessed by more than 4,500 people every day. The website provides practical information, tools and support to young people for everyday troubles and for really tough times. Mental Health care is as important to wellbeing as dental, medical, physical and spiritual care. I encourage each of us to take advantage of the tools and resources provided by the Reachout Foundation, regardless of how well things are going at the moment.

I would also like to take the chance to offer my time and ear to any member of our school community who may desire to have a chat. I see myself as a resource to the entire school community, parents and staff included. If you have any questions regarding what I do at the school or how I can support you, your child, or your family, my office hours are below and I would be honoured to connect with you.

Many blessings for Term 1,

James

James Norman
CHAPLAIN - SWANSEA HIGH SCHOOL
Community Activities Lake Macquarie Inc. (CALM)
Working to Make Lives Better

Office Hours: Mon 9am-2pm; Tues 9am-10am, 11am-1pm; Thurs 8am-9am, 10am-12pm

Disclaimer
The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

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More Information
For more information on the National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program, please visit the website at: http://deewr.gov.au/national-school-chaplaincy-and-student-welfare-program

13 February 2015

News from STRIVE, Drama, Chaplain
WEP

WEP Australia offers high school students the opportunity to embark on exciting journeys to over 25 countries around the world to explore new cultures, learn new languages and discover different lifestyles.

WEP Student Exchange Programs - Applications Open Now
World Education Program (WEP) Australia is now accepting applications from students who wish to participate in 2015/16 exchange programs for a summer, semester or year. Students can choose to study and live life with a carefully selected host family in more than 25 countries. Exchange students return to Australia with maturity, confidence, and in many cases, proficiency in another language. If learning another language is not for you, excellent programs to the USA, Canada, the UK and Ireland are also available.

Find Out More
Request an information pack online or attend one of WEP’s information sessions near you. Visit www.wep.org.au to find out more. Early Bird Specials are now available for programs commencing in 2016!
web: www.wep.org.au
phone: 03 9598 4733 / 1300 884 733 (for the cost of a local call)
email: info@wep.org.au

Newcastle Info Session - 28 February 2015
Time: 10-11:30am
Cardiff RSL
45 Macquarie Road
Cardiff
Air Force Cadets offers sky-high opportunity for local youth

Young people in the Hunter region who are looking for a challenge are invited to join a dynamic and exciting youth organisation.

The Australian Air Force Cadets (AAFC) is a voluntary organisation which aims to equip young people for community life by fostering initiative, leadership, discipline and loyalty. It is supported by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF).

Officer Commanding 3 Wing (NSW & ACT), Wing Commander (AAFC) Wayne Laycock said cadets participate in a wide range of activities.

“Our syllabus includes practical aviation, bushcraft and survival activities,” Wing Commander Laycock said.

“In addition to weekly meetings and weekend activities, cadets have the chance to apply for specialist courses conducted on Air Force bases during school holidays.”

Cadets develop a range of life skills including self-reliance, teamwork, initiative and a sense of mateship. They also make new friends and importantly, have fun!

There are four Air Force Cadet units in the Hunter region.

No 308 (City of Maitland) Squadron meets on Wednesday nights during the school term Address: Scobie Barracks, Harvey Road, Rutherford.

No 316 (City of Lake Macquarie) Squadron meets on Friday evenings during the school term and will hold a recruit information session on Thursday 5 and 12th of February at 7.00pm. Address: Bullecourt Barracks, Military Road, Adamstown.

No 321 (City of Newcastle) Squadron meets on Wednesday evenings during the school term Address: Bullecourt Barracks, Military Road, Adamstown.

No 335 Squadron meets on Tuesday evenings during the school term Address: RAAF Base Williamtown.

Anyone interested in joining the AAFC should attend the appropriate information night with their parent or guardian to learn more. New applicants must be between 13 and 18 years of age.

For more information about Australian Air Force Cadets, visit www.aafc.org.au.
Valentine Eleebana Football Club

Valentine Eleebana Football Club are inviting any girls interested in developing their football skills and playing in the Premier Women’s football competitions in the region to come along and join us this season. We have girls teams involved in competition in the 14’s, 16’s, 18’s and Women’s Premier League in Newcastle starting mid-March. We are especially interested in girls who would like to play as goalkeepers in the U16s and U18s teams.

The women’s programme at Valentine, gives all girls the opportunity to improve, develop, learn as a player, coach and team member, within various aspects of football.

We would welcome any girls wishing to play and improve their football in 2015.

Please contact Casie Wright - Head Coach - wpl@vefc.com.au or 0412 801 506

Avoiding injuries

Have you ever wondered if your child may be suffering physically from using a computer for schoolwork? Or if carrying their school bag may be causing them pain?


Technology talks

Find out about all the technologies your child could be using at school, at home and on the go. Scan the A-Z list for overall knowledge, find out how gadgets work, what their good points are and other usages you may need to be aware of.

Find out more: http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/technology

Jargon buster

Wondering why your kids talk about playing under the school COLA? Baffled at parent-teacher discussions about KLA’s? This list of common abbreviations or terms will help you to become familiar with the world inside school.


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