

11 November 2019

Dear Parents/Carers of our Year 7 students 2020

One of the most important things for me as Principal is that you feel encouraged to be a part of our school community and that you feel confident to ask questions and have them answered within a quick turnover time. I welcome your input and, to that end, feel free to make an appointment with your child's teachers whenever you feel the need. Our structures are designed to give you quality service – your best contact will be either of the two main teachers who work with your child's class. Deliberately we reduce the number of teachers allocated to each Year 7 class. They are two who will come to know your child very well – one of whom is your child's Pastoral Care teacher – and three or four others who will provide the necessary diversity in subject delivery that is reflective of the needs of young adolescents. The three Heads of Year 7 Mr Tim O'Connell, Mr Trent O'Brien and Mrs Tiffany Story will be your next port of call.

For your benefit, some points for your understanding re Safety, Respect and Learning at Centenary Heights:

- In an attempt to address **the issue of sun safety**, each Year 7, 8 and 9 student, in order to participate in Physical Education and Sport, is required to wear a hat/cap in line with primary school ethos. Sunscreen is available to all students from every staffroom and also from our main office. We began in 2018, and with Year 7 only, the wearing of the school hat (designed by the Student Leadership body in 2017). This is mandatory in 2020 for all Year 7s, 8s and 9s during both breaks in the school day and, as indicated, during Sport and Physical Education lessons. Our school plan is to progress the mandatory wearing of the school hat onwards with each year level eg Years 7, 8 and 9 in 2020, then Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 in 2021 etc. In the meantime older students will have the option and be encouraged to wear it.
- **Students who ride a bicycle to and/or from school** are required to wear a helmet. In a case where that does not occur, a courtesy call will be made to yourself advising of a breach and seeking your assistance. If there were to be a further breach, the choice would be for the bike, on the day, to be kept in secure lock up at school pending pick up by yourself or for your child to cease riding to/from school for the remainder of the term.
- **Given the busy roads and shops in our close proximity**, the only points at which students are permitted to cross the road are at the lights at the corner of South and Ramsay Streets or the crossing in South Street. Each afternoon, in support of our students' safety, we have two Heads of Year patrol the exits in South and Catto Streets and the Deputy Principals and myself oversee the roads around the school. Our students are very cooperative with my expectation that the Southtown shop area is cleared of all of our students by 3.15pm each afternoon. Students understand and accept that they may purchase from the shops but may not sit or linger. The same expectation applies to before school. If you wish to pick your child up from South Street after school please do so on the school side of South Street. If after 3.15pm, your child is asked to wait inside our fence line as opposed to the shop side. Southtown Shop Management specifically requests that parents do not park in their carpark area to collect their children.
- Please note that our students are not permitted, while in school uniform or any part of it, to linger in local parks before or after school. Our students are not permitted to change out of school uniform when departing the school.

Please see over

- **The correct wearing of our school uniform**, as designated by our P&C, is mandatory. It allows me at all times to know who is in our school. In this day and age, I expect you will appreciate that this is paramount for your child's safety and something I take very seriously. All items and any advice you may seek are available from our P&C Uniform Shop – Ph. 4636 7514.

Please note that, in order to diffuse any confusion for parents, black formal shoes, to accompany our formal uniform, are required to be lace up and with substantial impervious uppers – sports shoes are not permitted. The first school occasion where your child will require formal uniform is the first day of the school year – Tuesday 28 January 2020 and then again in Week 3 when school photographs are taken. Other occasions are Awards Night, Gold Level ceremony, and the two mandatory formal uniform days per term to name a few. It is very important that your child starts his/her enrolment at Centenary Heights with both a sports and formal uniform.
- **Facial piercing is not acceptable.** Should a newly enrolled student have a pre-existing facial piercing a compromise is made in support of the student and parent/carer in that a clear retainer is required to be worn at all times. If a clear retainer is not able to be worn due to health concerns the piercing is to be removed. In the case of a student who is able to wear a clear retainer but chooses not to he/she will be directed to the main office to sign the piercing in and receive a clear retainer. The cost will be billed to the student's account. The piercing is not permitted to be covered.
- **Tuesday afternoons in Period 4, all Year 7 and 8 students have Sport.** Sport is a crucial component of our curriculum offerings and participation is mandatory. I ask that any personal appointment not be made during this time as I do not permit students to sign out from school at this time unless there is an extraordinary circumstance. Smart Moves is a State Government initiative requiring compliance from all state schools. Its purpose is to promote the benefits of physical activity amongst our youth. To this end our junior school students will, on our Tuesday afternoons, be taught the skills related to a range of sports. This program will be based on a social sport model that involves participating in various rotations. Participation by all is mandatory. For any student who may be long term ill or injured, attendance is still required where feasible and, in lieu of participation, a support task to a team is allocated.
- **Re Homework:** I am very conscious that the famous "I don't have any homework" comment may cause angst at home so I shall set that straight for you. Homework in secondary school is either set as an exercise eg Page 10 Exercise 3 or it may not be specifically set for a certain night – rather your child will know an assignment is due in a couple of weeks and that work needs to be regularly done to ensure it is submitted on time and is of quality. Homework may also be that class notes are taken on the day and are to be re-read at home or the ongoing reading of a novel is required. Either way I urge you to negotiate with your child a definite time each afternoon/evening where your child sits, checks his/her Homework Diary and toils away. There will not be a time where "I have no homework" is acceptable. Your child's personal Student Assessment Planner is accessible through your membership to QParents from the beginning of Semester 1 and the next version at the beginning of Semester 2. The recommended amount of time for each school night is 45 minutes and students are strongly encouraged to do some extra reading on top of this. Please see attached a further explanation of "What is Homework"
- **As with all State Schools we are a Smart Choices school.** This means a student may not bring 'red food' items onto the premises eg soft drink, hot chips, lollies etc and certainly they are not sold at our tuckshop.

- I understand the need for ready communication between parent/carer and child and hence **mobile phones are permitted**. They are not permitted to be in use within a classroom nor while walking between classes. If there is an indiscretion in this area the student is required to take the phone to the office where he/she will sign it in to be kept in the school safe. It may not be collected by the student, rather by the parent/carer at his/her convenience. Any further indiscretion and the issue becomes one of persistent disobedience and may attract a consequence in accordance with our Responsible Behaviour Plan.
 - It is not recommended that students bring iPods etc to school. They are valuable devices and if loss or damage occurs, our school accepts no liability. If the device is at school a reminder that, like phones, they are not to be used in lesson time or moving between lessons.
 - I urge you to check our Responsible Behaviour Plan in relation to the use of phones and electronic devices. Our policy is strictly enforced.
- As you join the parent/carer community of our school I ask for your understanding with regard to **the relaying of messages from yourselves to your child**. Our office staff are not in a position to make ready contact with many classes in the secondary school as classes are quite transient, and so I have requested of them that they only relay messages of a genuinely urgent nature. An example of such would be an emergent health situation in the family.

Examples where I have asked them not to relay messages are a change of transport arrangements, changed lunch arrangements etc. Please do not be offended if, in light of this, they are not able to meet your request. Given this 'heads up' it would be excellent if you devise an alternate method of emergent communication with your child. Similarly, our students are instructed not to text parents/carers to pick them up during school hours. If there is a need our office staff will action that and appropriate sign out processes will be followed. Again these protocols are strictly enforced.

- **In the event your child falls ill during a school day** – he/she may access our Sick Bay (located in our school main office). If he/she feels the need to remain in Sick Bay past one full lesson, given Sick Bay is only a temporary option, I ask our office staff to phone you and request that you collect your child as soon as possible. Often the best place in that situation is home.
- **Teacher Contact**
Should you wish to meet/speak with a teacher please make an appointment through the front office. I do not permit staff to take appointments that have not been prescheduled as it has the potential to cause them to be late to class. Similarly please be sure to sign in through the front office and attach a Visitor tag – this is a legal requirement. It is imperative that you do not go straight to buildings without following process including making a prior appointment.
- **Communication**
In the case of a family where parents have shared access – both parents are welcome to join QParents, where report cards and assessment planners are accessible. I trust that parents communicate well with each other in regard to their child and so, in the interests of staff time, communication by phone and/or email is conducted with just one nominated parent. Similarly, parents are welcome to attend Parent/Teacher/Student interviews together however we do not conduct more than one such interview.

Please see over

- **Report Cards**

Year 7 students are issued with four (4) Report Cards throughout the year and there will be three (3) opportunities for Parent/Teacher/Student meetings with the first meeting being an informal Meet & Greet Evening on Thursday 13 February 2020. The first report will be in the form of a Progress Report (Week 8) and there will be a Report Card accessible at the end of each term of study through your membership to QParents.

- **Parent/Carer access to our school by car**

Our school will have in excess of 1650 students on site at any one time. We have over 220 staff. Our size means, for the safety of all, we do not have any student pick-up or drop-off in our school at any time. Similarly, I ask that parents/carers do not park their cars on school grounds. The Toowoomba Regional Council has street car parking for our parents/carers as an alternative. The only exception to this is for parents/carers who have a child with a disability (ie who is supported by our Special Education Program) and who have permission from the school to access the school grounds. Given we have boom gates in operation at our school (gate is lowered at 7.15am each weekday morning and lifted at 3.30pm), along with your permit, you will have been issued with a swipe card for access. Replacement, should you lose the card, is a \$7.00 cost.

- **It is a requirement for students in Years 7 - 12 to bring a laptop to school** and we encourage families to select and purchase a laptop from within specifications contained in the BYOD booklet in the information pack to bring to school. This laptop will be for the student's personal use and is considered as their primary device. With this primary device we will continue to support students by diagnosing IT issues and consulting with families if further action is required.

- **Have you considered bus transport for your child?**

Buses are recognised in Australia as the safest form of Road Transport, and you can rest assured that Bus Queensland's drivers are well trained to deliver your child safely to school. **Bus Queensland** details can be found on the website below or email schools@busqld.com.au

<https://www.busqld.com.au/school/>

Bus Queensland advises contact be made as soon as possible.

I enjoy the understanding and cooperation of all Centenary Heights State High School parents/carers and students in the areas listed above and I look forward to you and your child becoming part of that culture. Many thanks in anticipation of your support and, to those of you who are new parents/carers to our school, I do extend a sincere welcome to Centenary Heights.

Look forward to meeting you.

Maryanne Walsh
Principal

cc: Deputy Principals
Heads of Department
Assistant Heads of Year