



Dear Parents,

I hope this bulletin finds you well, and I really mean that!

I wanted to start off with reminding you about us, about what we do, what we believe in and what we value. Above all else, we are about children and young people, their learning, their needs and even their problems. We are about the whole child. We are a school which is child centred, and so all our efforts, our work and our endeavours revolve around the achievement of each student's potential, academically, socially and emotionally. We have the highest expectations for each young person in our care and, as such, it is our responsibility to do our utmost to ensure that is exactly what each of them realises.

This is who we are and over the years we have been ever-increasingly working at how teachers can foster deep learning and promote students' thinking, academically, socially and emotionally. The use of thinking routines, a practice originating from the researchers at Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, has emerged as a key practice in supporting these goals. Thinking routines can not only scaffold and support students in thinking, but can also help to make thinking more visible to both students and teachers. All of this leads to more responsive instruction.

These routines we install in our learning disposition of High Performance Learning (HPL), VAA's; Values, Attitudes and Attributes (HOW TO BEHAVE WITH LEARNING) and ACP's; Advanced Cognitive Performance Characteristics (HOW TO THINK WITH LEARNING). Look out for these when you watch some of our lessons online. We embed these thinking dispositions in all we do in order to provide a scaffold for learning for all our students and understand that there is high potential in all. No matter the starting point, a growth mindset is all that is needed.

Part of the learning journey as educators is looking to engage students more in the learning journey. One aspect that we have recently invested in is virtual and augmented reality, VR. A new way to spark imagination and enhance student learning and engagement. It can transform the way educational content is delivered; it works on the premise of creating a virtual world — real or imagined — and allows users not only to see it but also interact with it. Being immersed in what you're learning motivates you to fully understand it. Thanks to the feeling of presence VR provides, students can learn about a subject by living it. It's easy to forget that VR experiences aren't real — a body actually believes it's in a new place. This feeling engages the mind in a way that is remarkable. We are presently upskilling staff on how it can be used and integrated into lessons. I look forward to it being used on a regular basis.

#covidbegone continues to knock at our door and we do appreciate this can be difficult for some parents, in particular EYFS and Primary. As a school we have limited choices, however do reach out to us and we will do all we can to support you and your family. Student and staff safety are our number one priority. Even though it may be uncomfortable please do what is right, if you are waiting for a PCR test, stay at home, if you were in contact with anyone that has COVID or even symptoms of COVID, stay at home. If your child is feeling unwell (sniffle, cold, cough, sore throat, headache), stay at home. Please help us keep our school safe.

Let me leave you with this quote:

*Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting the kids working together and motivating them, the teacher is most important.*

Bill Gates

Sincerely,

Lachlan MacKinnon  
CEO/Principal