



# Pennant Hills High School

Responsibility Integrity Achievement

## INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS





*"We have really enjoyed our time at Pennant Hills. We've made some great local friends, had excellent teachers and been involved in many enrichment activities during our high school years.*

*Our school promotes a fantastic learning environment full of great opportunities to thrive. Through leadership, academics, performing arts and sport, 'Penno' provides students with everything they need to succeed."*

*Sonia Wensley and Hiroshi Mukhopadhyay  
2020-2021 School Captains*

## Statement of purpose

Pennant Hills High School promotes excellence in a supportive and nurturing learning environment which encourages students to achieve their potential. Our students develop a strong sense of identity and belonging, and are encouraged and supported to become independent, lifelong learners who develop into responsible, well-adjusted, confident, compassionate and caring citizens.

We aim to:

- create a happy and safe school by providing a positive, stable and caring environment in which each individual can develop to his or her potential;
- ensure high quality teaching and learning by building the capacity of staff through the provision of appropriate professional learning, resources and support;
- provide a broad curriculum designed to challenge and extend each individual;
- encourage community participation through cooperation between the school, home and the wider community to ensure that each individual's talents, skills and abilities may be identified, developed and utilised;
- maintain parents' awareness of the progress and development of students by regular and constructive communication; and
- provide a holistic and inclusive education for all students.



# Introduction

## A tradition of excellence

Pennant Hills High School was founded in 1966 and has educated thousands of students to take their place as productive and successful members of society.

A broad and diverse curriculum, expert and experienced teachers and a strong culture of effort and attainment underpin the school's many years of success. Our curriculum is carefully structured to meet students' needs and to provide access to all Key Learning Areas. Our rigorous academic program is complemented by access to Vocational Education and Training (VET) through both school campus and TAFE colleges, and by a wide range of curriculum enrichment experiences and service learning.

The majority of Pennant Hills High School students pursue post-secondary education. Some of our alumni include:

Senator John Faulkner

Dr Peter Schofield, CEO Neuroscience Research Australia

Dr Megan Chircop (nee Fabbro), Lead Researcher, Children's Medical Research Institute

Dr Ken Wishaw, first Care Flight anaesthetist

Justice Hilary Hannam, Family Court

Anthony Ricketts, squash champion

Lisa Ho, fashion designer

Adam Rutter, Olympic athlete

Timothy Mehigan, Head of Languages and Cultures, University of Otago

Jeff McBride, SBS

Kelvin Ho



## Coeducation for life

Pennant Hills High School educates girls and boys in a cooperative environment of equality. Students benefit from welfare programs that help them learn together and respect each other as individuals. Coeducational schools develop girls and boys who are supported and confident, respectful men and women.

## Student Wellbeing

Pennant Hills High School is committed to the provision of a happy and safe school for all students. We devote ourselves to the care and wellbeing of every student, and foster a culture of cooperation and collaboration in order to provide a secure and supportive learning environment.

We believe that success at school is closely linked to student wellbeing. There is a strong and effective Learning Support Team, headed by a Head Teacher Wellbeing and full-time School Counsellors.

## Partnerships

Pennant Hills High School is based on the philosophy of cooperation.

Communication between staff, students and family is essential for student success. We enjoy the support of an enthusiastic and supportive Parents and Citizens Association, which provides resources that directly improve student learning and wellbeing.

Our Community of Schools is a vital part of our Middle Years of Schooling Strategy. We possess a partnership with Macquarie University and our staff participate in a number of professional networks to facilitate high-quality teaching and learning experiences and curriculum enrichment.

# Pennant Hills High School

## Facilities

Pennant Hills High School is set in over 50 acres of natural bushland. There are extensive playing fields and covered areas, and an outdoor classroom.

Facilities include a large Learning Hub for interactive project-based learning and a well-equipped Library and Study Centre.

Pennant Hills students work in computer laboratories, Science laboratories and a modern Technology and Visual Arts building, featuring a computerised milling machine and laser cutter, a darkroom and Visual Arts studios. There is also a state-of-the-art commercial kitchen which enables us to deliver Hospitality courses and a farm for the delivery of Agriculture courses up to HSC level.



## Location and transport

Most of our students live locally and walk to school, or travel on designated school bus services. The school is a short (1 km) walk from Pennant Hills railway station along quiet residential streets. Some school buses connect with the station. Many students are eligible for free transport passes, which are arranged through the Transport for NSW Website: <https://transportnsw.info/travel-info/school-travel> or call 131 500.

## Enrolment

To discover if you live within our catchment area, please consult the Enrolment section of our website, or call our Enrolments Officer, Mrs Claudia Antoon, on 9473 5000.

Pennant Hills High School's enrolment policy conforms to the Department of Education (DoE) policy on enrolment which states that children are entitled to be enrolled at the government school that is designated for the intake area within which the child's home is situated and that the child is eligible to attend. School local areas are determined by the Department through a process involving consultation between DoE officers and the school.

Schools are required to set an enrolment number to cater for anticipated local demand and to seek to ensure that every eligible local child has a place at his or her local school if he or she chooses. Parents may seek to enrol their child in the school of their choice. Where this involves a request to enrol a student who resides outside the designated intake area for Pennant Hills High School, certain criteria are applied, including availability of appropriate staff and permanent accommodation.



## Criteria for Non-local Enrolment Applications

Criteria for selecting amongst non-local enrolment applications for enrolment at Pennant Hills High School are:

- commitment to learning
- proximity and access to Pennant Hills High School;
- siblings already enrolled in the school;
- medical reasons;
- safety and supervision of the student before and after school;
- availability of subjects or combinations of subjects not available at other schools;
- special interests and abilities;
- compassionate circumstances;
- structure and organisation of the school.



# Curriculum

The academic program at Pennant Hills High School provides a well-rounded education to equip students to prosper in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Stage 4: Years 7 and 8

The curriculum in Years 7 and 8 gives students experience in a wide range of subjects and is designed to develop and broaden students' skills and interests in learning. In Year 7 all students study a core curriculum:

English  
Mathematics  
Science  
Music  
Personal Development, Health & Physical Education (PDHPE)  
Technology  
Geography  
History  
Visual Arts  
Languages – French, Japanese, Chinese (Mandarin)

\*Three languages are studied over four terms in Year 7, with one chosen to continue in Year 8

Year 8 students pursue a similar core curriculum, but also have “taster courses” running for one term each:

Agriculture  
Drama/Music  
Information Technology/Multimedia  
Visual Arts

## Stage 5: Years 9 and 10

The curriculum in Years 9 and 10 provides continuity of studies in the Key Learning Areas of English, Mathematics, Science, PDHPE and Australian Geography and History. It also allows students to choose elective courses which they pursue in Year 9 and 10. Students may study three from the following Stage 5 elective courses offered:

Aboriginal Studies  
Agriculture  
Commerce  
Drama  
Food Technology  
Industrial Technology – Metal, Timber and Multimedia  
Information & Software Technology  
Languages – French, Japanese, Chinese (Mandarin)  
Music  
Physical Activity & Sports Studies  
STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)  
Textiles Technology  
Visual Arts



Special Religious Education is available in Stages 4 and 5 through an approved provider to those students whose parents/caregivers choose to have them receive such instruction.



## Stage 6: Years 11 and 12

Stage 6 prepares students for University and other further education, and the workforce. Pennant Hills High School has a strong academic focus, but also provides access to vocational pathways through TAFE courses. English is the only compulsory subject.

Students choose their patterns of study from course offerings below, as well as from several TAFE-delivered Vocational Education and Training (VET) Framework courses and non-Framework TAFE courses.

Agriculture  
Biology  
Business Studies  
Chemistry  
Chinese and Literature  
Community & Family Studies  
Drama  
English (Standard, Advanced, Extension Courses 1 and 2)  
English EAL/D  
English Studies (non-ATAR course)  
Economics  
Engineering Studies  
Food Technology  
French (Beginners and Continuers)  
Geography  
History (Ancient, Modern and HSC Extension)  
Hospitality  
Industrial Technology –  
    (Timber Products & Furniture Technologies)  
Information Processes & Technology  
Japanese (Beginners and Continuers)  
Legal Studies  
Mathematics –  
    (Standard 1&2, Advanced, HSC Extension Courses 1 & 2)  
Music (Course 1, Course 2, HSC Extension)  
Personal Development, Health & Physical Education  
Philosophy (1 unit preliminary course only)  
Photography (1 or 2 unit)  
Physics  
Society & Culture  
Software Design & Development  
Sport, Lifestyle & Recreation Studies (1 and 2 unit)  
Studies of Religion  
Textiles & Design  
Visual Arts (1 and 2 unit)  
Work Studies (1 unit)



# Academic achievement



All students at Pennant Hills benefit from a culture of high expectations and support to achieve their personal best.

There is an active Gifted and Talented Students team, which leads our teachers in policy and program development, the creation of rich assessment tasks and professional learning in enrichment and extension. This team also operates many gifted and talented programs beyond the classroom to enhance student development. These include the Chess Club, Tournament of the Minds and the Science Linkages program.

An academically selected class operates in Stage 4 which follows a program of gifted and talented education. Access to this class is through an entrance examination held in March each year.



Project Learning is a key focus, with a specially designed Learning Hub to facilitate flexible, conceptual critical thinking. Over one-third of Pennant Hills teachers are trained in Project Learning.

The 10% on Top program provides all HSC students with a teacher mentor who works with them to help them achieve their academic potential. Senior students are provided with an array of appropriate strategies to assist in improving their learning outcomes and in coping with the stresses and challenges of their HSC year



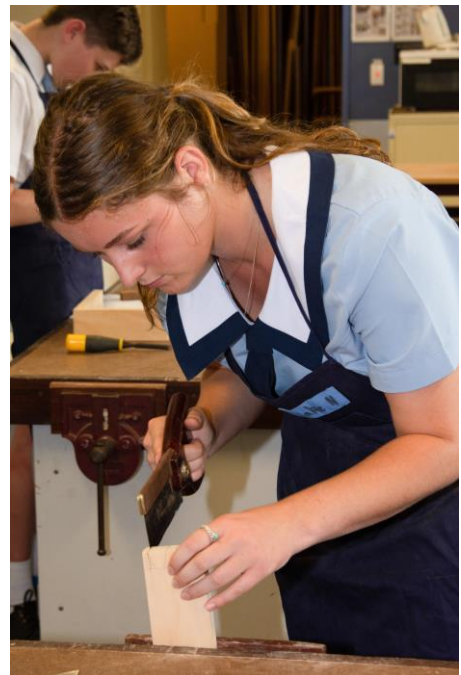
## 2020 HSC Results

The majority of Pennant Hills High School students gain entrance to University or other post-secondary education. In 2020, over 65% of the cohort received an offer to study at University.

Each year a large number of students receive Band 6 results in one or more subjects. In 2020, our students achieved 55 Band 6 or Band E4 results, which placed them in the highest category of possible results in their courses.

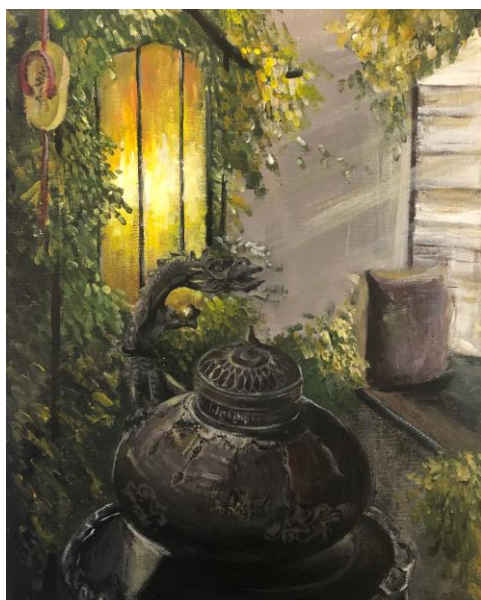
Our Year 12 students performed very well in last year's Higher School Certificate (HSC), with 11% of students achieving ATARs of 90 or above ie. from a candidature of 137 students, 15 achieved ATARs of 90 or above.

Emily Sykes was DUX of the school for 2020 with an ATAR of 98.75. One of our Year 12 students Antonia Dreierova was named in the All-Rounders List – a prestigious honour given to students who achieved a result in the highest band possible in 10 or more units of courses in their pattern of study.



# Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA)

Pennant Hills High School has a tradition of excellence in the Creative and Performing Arts. Cultural pursuits are a cornerstone of our school, and Visual Arts, Music and Drama are all key aspects. Highlights include the CAPA Festival in Term 3, and the Drama and Music Festivals mid-year.



## Visual Arts

Pennant Hills High School students learn in an outstanding facility that gives them access to up-to-date media and equipment, including digital media hardware and software. All students study Visual Arts in Stage 4, and then are able to elect the subject in Stages 5 and 6.

Students' HSC works are consistently featured in the annual ARTEXPRESS exhibition, which showcases exceptional HSC artworks from across the state. The annual Art Exhibition in August features work from every Visual Arts student in the school, and is an event not to be missed.

Students attend excursions which consequently influence their artmaking practice. Students also have the opportunity to have their artworks curated and displayed in offices and public areas around the school.



## Music

Music is a core subject in Year 7. From Year 9, students can elect to study Music up to the HSC level. The Music Faculty is a vibrant one, offering Music I, Music II and Music Extension in Stage 6.

There is an extensive Music Ensemble program, comprising Concert Band 1 – conducted by Mr Ben Perche and Concert Band 2 – conducted by Mr Hayden Dalton, a Junior Stage Band and Big Band – conducted by Mr James Loughnan, the Choir and the String Ensemble - conducted by Ms Rachel Kelly. 2021 approx. 100 students attended our annual Music Camp which is approximately 10% of our student body. Our School Choir participates in Schools Spectacular each year. Pennant Hills High School is fortunate to have access to highly skilled and experienced conductors and tutors, and the breadth of talent is reflected in the success of the bands. The bands are regularly awarded Gold for their performances in competitions such as the NSW School Band Festival. They also perform in the Festival of Instrumental and Choral Music at the Opera House each year.





## Drama

Students may elect to study Drama from Year 9 through to HSC level with our highly qualified Drama staff.

Regular whole school musical productions are staged, which give students from all years, as well as partner primary school students, the opportunity to perform. Recent productions include *Annie*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Oliver!*

Both junior and senior students regularly present short plays for the school and the community as part of their coursework. Highly acclaimed recent productions include *Stories in the Dark* in 2019 and *Summer of the Aliens* in 2020.

There is a Drama Ensemble, open to all students.





# Leadership



Pennant Hills High School regards every student as a potential leader. Leadership skills are developed both within and beyond the classroom. We possess a strong leadership framework, based on the following groups:

- The Prefect body is a highly effective group, drawn from Years 11 and 12, and which includes Sport Prefects, Band and Choir. This group represents the school in the community, builds and maintains school pride and spirit and works for charity, donating considerable sums to nominated charities each year.
- The Student Leadership Council (SLC) is elected by all students, and each Year group is represented. They provide students with a voice in the school and add considerable enjoyment and improvement to school life. They work on whole school projects such as grounds beautification, and are renowned for their annual Spirit Week, a week of celebration.
- Peer Support is an Australia-wide program designed to help Year 7 adjust to their new school with the assistance of their Year 10 mentors. It operates very successfully at Pennant Hills, with connections maintained between students beyond the conclusion of the formal program.
- The Community Concert is organised each September by Year 12 students. Local retirement villages, nursing homes and our neighbours attend a concert showcasing the rich talent of our students, who host a morning tea for guests afterwards. This is one way Year 12 give back to the community to commemorate the end of their secondary schooling.
- Students in Years 7-10 have the opportunity to participate in the Premier's Sporting Challenge - a sports leadership program. The aim of the program in the middle years of schooling is to teach students the fundamentals of setting up, managing and officiating a variety of sports and physical activities. They have the opportunity to put these skills into practice at a variety of events that are run throughout the year.

# Sport

Sport at Pennant Hills High School provides all students with the opportunity to participate in recreational and competitive sport from novice to elite levels. The school enjoys a proud tradition of success in a wide range of sports.

Students in Year 7 play integrated sport, as part of a program linked to the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education course. This course builds skills and confidence in a wide range of sports and is delivered by trained and experienced Physical Education teachers. Additionally, all Year 7 students participate in a Sports Gala Day competing against local schools in team sports of their choice.



In Years 8 to 10 students participate in the Kuring-Gai Zone Grade Sports Competition. Years 11 and 12 students are invited to participate if desired. This competition occurs during school hours on Thursday afternoons.

The grade sport competition for boys and girls includes Football, Volleyball, Netball, Basketball, Hockey, European Handball, Ultimate Frisbee, Sofcrosse, OzTag, Touch Football, Badminton, Rugby Union, League, Softball, Baseball, Table Tennis and Futsal. The grade sport competition brings together students from across the school and develops leadership, teamwork and a sense of fair play.

Our school also competes in state-wide knockout sports competitions for government schools. Pennant Hills High School competes in a variety of sports. Teams are either U15s or Opens. Most years several of our Knockout teams win their way through to the NSW/CWS State Semi-finals.

Students compete at carnivals in Swimming, Cross Country running and Athletics, with many going on to represent our school at Zone, Area, State and National level.

In 2019 Pennant Hills High School was ranked in the top three in the Zone for Athletics, Swimming and Cross Country.

Our Para Athletes performed magnificently in the Para Athlete categories, winning the Champion Para Athlete School Titles at the Zone, Regional and CHS Swimming, Athletics and Cross Country Championships.

In 2019 three teams placed in the top ten of the NSW All Schools Championships with our Senior Boys' Triathlon team finishing in first place.



## Curriculum enrichment

Pennant Hills High School is committed to a broadly-based, comprehensive education. Students are involved in a wide range of activities which develop their confidence, leadership and teamwork capabilities, and their self-esteem and self-knowledge.

### Duke of Edinburgh's Award Program

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Program is available to students in Years 9 – 12. This scheme is an internationally recognised youth development program providing opportunities for personal and social growth. PPHS conducts expeditions each year in National Parks, operated and supervised by fully trained teachers from the Outdoor Education Group and Laurel Hill Lodge.



### Student Enviro Team - PEAS

The *Penno Environmental Agricultural & Sustainability* team is a student-led team supported by a Head Teacher who analyse environmental issues and investigate ways to minimise our environmental impact, creating awareness and a culture of change towards sustainability. They lead the recycling drive in the school.

### Drama Ensemble

Students across all Year groups have the opportunity to participate in these extra-curricular activities run by the Drama Faculty, allowing students to develop skills in dramatic performance.



### Choir

Rachel Kelly is the Conductor of our School Choir. As an accomplished music educator, choral conductor, composer, arranger and pianist, Rachel leads a vibrant, exciting program for students from Years 7 – 12. Choir practice is held every Tuesday morning before school.

### Light and Sound Crew

This team is trained in all aspects of backstage work, and provides technical design and support for performances and formal assemblies held in the MPC.



### Programming Competitions

Students participate in Australia wide Programming Competitions and learn how to problem solve programming issues within short time constraints.

### Photography Club

The Photography Club gives students who are interested in photography the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of taking a photograph. It is an online Club formed through the Pennant Hills High School Facebook page called "Pennant Hills High School Photography Club" and all students are welcome to join. Links to interesting and relevant articles will be posted as well as opportunities for students to post work and get constructive feedback.



## **Debating**

Students from all years participate with great success in statewide debating competitions.

## **Young Endeavour**

Each year a student from our school is selected to sail on a *Young Endeavour* voyage. The Royal Australian Navy crew teaches participants how to sail a square-rigged vessel, including how to navigate, keep watch, take the helm, work aloft and even take command. The program develops teamwork, leadership and communication skills.

## **Academic Challenge**

Students have the opportunity to take part in a challenge with partner primary school students during Term 2. This program calls on the participants' leadership, teamwork and other skills to solve problems, to analyse and to evaluate a situation. This interaction with younger students builds a sense of mentoring and collaboration.

## **Science Linkages**

Gifted and talented students work with students from partner primary schools. Pennant Hills High School students develop a project-based Science program, which develops their leadership and communication skills, and primary school students gain confidence in their ability to transition to high school.

## **Chess**

An active Chess Club meets weekly and members enter competitions both within and beyond the school. The annual PHHS Chess Tournament finds the grade and the school champion. The school also has an outdoor chessboard on which students enjoy playing.

## **Academic Competitions**

Students have the opportunity to enter a wide range of competitions: statewide Mathematics, Science and Geography competitions, as well as *Young Writer Of The Year*.

## **Work Experience**

Students have the opportunity to experience different careers during the Work Experience period in Year 10. Our Careers Adviser assists students with career decisions, vocational testing and work placements.

## **The Horizons Program**

Each year a student from our school is selected to participate in The Horizons Program. The program is designed to show students what life in the workforce is like. It creates opportunities by developing connections through mentors in the Corporate workplace.

## **Boys Mentoring Program**

Aimed at Year 9 students to develop boys into strong, articulate and empathetic young men. A variety of subjects and scenarios are explored which focus on informed decision making and positive choices.

# Student wellbeing



We believe that student wellbeing relies upon effective partnerships to support students experiencing problems. A highly qualified and experienced student wellbeing team works collaboratively with students, staff and parents to help students thrive. Mutual respect, cooperation and courtesy are the basis for these partnerships.

Our school provides a network of people who are able to assist those experiencing difficulties. All teachers

and the school executive provide welfare support for students, but there are some specific services to provide extra assistance if it is required. The Learning and Support Team includes the Principal, Deputy Principals, School Counsellors, the Year Adviser for each year group, the Head Teachers Student Wellbeing and the Learning and Support Teacher.

## Recognition of success

Pennant Hills is a 'Positive Behaviour for Engaging Learners' school, founded on the values of responsibility, integrity and achievement. We recognise and celebrate student achievement in a number of ways.

Assembly Awards are given to students who have brought credit to themselves and the school through a range of activities. There is an Award System which encourages excellence through Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards. Students can achieve these awards in the following areas:

### **Responsibility Merit**

- Responsible Citizenship
- Commitment to Learning
- School Representation

### **Integrity Merit**

- Positive Role Model
- Respectful Behaviour
- Social Justice

### **Achievement Merit**

- Academic Achievement
- Personal Best
- Outstanding Achievement
- Embracing Challenges



A House system awards points for participation not just in sport but in all curricular areas, and an Annual Awards Ceremony is held yearly to celebrate our student achievements.



## Communication between home and school

Formal communication between the school and families occurs through *Jumbunna*, the fortnightly newsletter which is emailed to all families, and posted on the website. Additional communication occurs through Parent Teacher Evenings, Information Evenings, Student Reports issued twice yearly, and in ongoing informal communication between staff and families. There is a parent portal, which provides key information relevant to your child such as attendance, timetables and general news items. The school website is regularly updated and a good source of information, as are the school Facebook and Twitter pages.

## Supporting newly enrolled students

While most new enrolments enter the school in Year 7, a significant number of students enrol at other times in their secondary schooling. It is our priority to ensure that these students are supported in this transition. Support is provided through the 'buddy' program, which links them with a student who can help them in those first few weeks. Year Advisers and Deputy Principals are always on hand to help.

## Year 7 at Pennant Hills



The care and attention shown to new students is fundamental to their wellbeing. At Pennant Hills High School we have a carefully developed support system which sets us apart.

Our welcome to high school begins the year before students commence Year 7. A comprehensive information package is mailed to each student in September, and students complete our "Tell Us About You" survey, which helps us get to know our new students, and with practicalities such as class composition. In December we hold an Orientation Day where students meet their Peer Support leaders and take an in-depth look at their new school.

The curriculum in Year 7 is supported by prioritising Year 7 classes in the timetabling process, to avoid classes that are 'split' by having more than one teacher for a certain subject.

Students undertake a program called 'Success in High School Learning' designed to build the skills students need to succeed at high school. These include time

management, digital safety, research, note making and study skills, getting along with others and many more.

Strong support is provided by a specific Year 7 Adviser, who is a valuable source of advice and assistance for students and parents. This Adviser stays with the Year throughout their schooling, as does the supporting Deputy Principal. The Year 7 Adviser is a guest speaker at the first P & C meeting of the year, held on the fourth Tuesday in February, and this is an ideal time to hear about the group's progress and ask questions. Of course parents may call or email staff at any time to discuss matters.

Year 7 students and staff participate in an Orientation Camp at Vision Valley in the second week of the school year. The purpose of the camp is for students to get to know each other in a relaxed and enjoyable environment.

Early in Term 1 an afternoon barbecue is held for all Year 7 students and families and is attended by teachers and the Executive Team. This informal event is a great way to meet your child's teachers and their friends, and connect with other parents.

Year 7 learning and wellbeing is supported in a highly practical way with weekly meetings of Year 7 teaching teams to ensure that any issues arising in class and with social aspects of school are dealt with in a timely and effective manner.



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