

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

I hope this newsletter finds you warm and well as we reach the end of Term 2.

School Review

It was a privilege for our school to undertake our School Review on Tuesday 19 May 2026. This Department of Education process, conducted every four years, provides an opportunity to reflect on data, evidence and the valuable perspectives of staff, students and parents.

As part of the review, a panel was formed comprising representatives from the Department of Education, members of our staff, School Council President **Ms Nicki Dear**, and challenge partners – principals from other settings invited to provide both supportive and critical reflections on our school's progress to date.

Together, these perspectives informed our understanding of the milestones, achievements and opportunities for growth within our current Strategic Plan (2022–2026), while also helping to shape the goals and priorities for our next School Strategic Plan (2027–2030).

Members of the review panel acknowledged the outstanding outcomes achieved by Ashwood High School over the past four years. These achievements are reflected in our VCE and NAPLAN results, as well as in the feedback provided by students, staff and parents through the annual Department of Education surveys. Across almost every measure, our results were well above the state average and exceeded those of similar schools.

Anecdotally, panel members also commented on the kindness, respect and authenticity demonstrated by our students. They noted the openness with which students acknowledged and engaged with visitors in the school grounds – something they remarked as increasingly rare in many secondary school settings. This feedback was a source of great pride and speaks strongly to the culture of our school community.

I speak on behalf of staff when I say that we feel both proud of what has been achieved and excited about the next stage of our school's improvement journey. At the same time, we remain mindful and appreciative of the considerable work that has brought us to this point.

The key areas of focus for our next Strategic Plan (2027–2030) include:

Goal 1: Further improving student learning outcomes by:

- Continuing to embed consistency of practice across all classrooms through the full implementation of the Victorian Teaching and Learning Model ([VTLM 2.0](#)); and
- Enhancing opportunities for collaborative practice amongst staff, including strengthening the capacity of middle and senior leaders to develop high-performing teams.



Ms Meg McLellan
Acting Principal

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Goal 2: Continuing to improve student wellbeing outcomes by:

- Enhancing systems and processes that support school operations through tiered systems of support; and
- Strengthening communication and engagement with our broader community, including parents and families, alumni and external organisations.

While the new School Strategic Plan will officially commence in 2027, the Leadership Team has commenced the strategic planning required to ensure a smooth transition into this refined focus. Central to this work is a commitment to sustainability of practice and to doing fewer things, but doing them exceptionally well.

As a leader in our school community, I feel a strong sense of optimism and momentum amongst staff as we begin planning for this next phase. Our collective focus remains clear: enhancing the learning, wellbeing and success of every student.

Acting Principal Announcement – Terms 3 and 4, 2026

As communicated via Compass on Thursday 25 June 2026, **Mr Michael Foster** of University High School was the successful applicant for the Acting Principal position for Terms 3 and 4, 2026. The selection panel spoke highly of Mr Foster's professional accomplishments and experiences, and I will work to support his smooth transition to our school. We will look forward to welcoming him into our school community at the commencement of Term 3, at which time I will return to my substantive role as Middle School Assistant Principal.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as Acting Principal over the past nine months, and I am grateful for the opportunity. At this time, I would also like to sincerely thank the many members of our school community who have supported me throughout this period. The encouragement, trust and kindness shown by students, staff, parents and School Council have been truly appreciated, and I am proud of what we have achieved together during this time.

On behalf of our staff, I wish all students and families a safe, restful and well-deserved Term 2 holiday break.

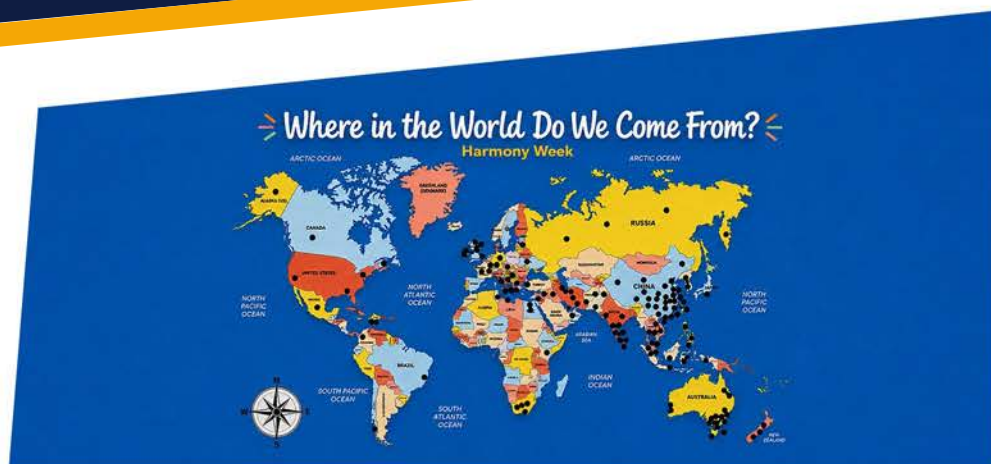
COMMUNITY

of Learning and Trust

Spotlight on the Library and Study Hall



Mr Matthew Feeney
Library Manager



This year, Ashwood High School appointed its first Student Library Ambassadors. As inaugural ambassadors, **Diya Masters** (Year 9), **Ashley DuBois** (Year 9) and **Katania Major** (Year 9), are helping define the role through initiative, creativity, and enthusiasm. Since their appointment, they have contributed fresh ideas for library displays and guided Year 7 students in accessing library resources. Their involvement is strengthening student voice and helping shape the library's future direction.

The library marks annual occasions such as Harmony Week, Reconciliation Week, and Pride Month with displays and activities. During Harmony Week, students and staff were invited to mark their family's country of origin on a world map (shown above), creating a visual celebration of our community's diversity and a greater awareness of different perspectives, cultures, and experiences.

Displays and promotions help identify resource areas that may benefit from updating or expansion. While modest in size, our collection is dynamic and continually evolving to meet the needs of students and staff. New titles are regularly added in response to curriculum requirements, staff recommendations, and student suggestions.

Library resources extend beyond the physical collection. Students and staff have access to digital resources. Our [World Book Online](#) subscription includes access for parents and siblings, with a K+ level for primary students.

Participation in this year's [Premiers' Reading Challenge](#) is already at a record level, and there is still time for students to take part before the challenge closes in September. It is a great way to broaden reading while earning House points.

The library is open school days, 8:00am to 4:30pm. Students are welcome to use the space for reading and study at recess, lunchtimes, and before and after school. After school on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the library hosts Middle School Study Hall with teacher support in English, Humanities, Maths, and Science.



COMMUNITY

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Year 10 Camp

22 - 24 June 2026



Ms Georgia Kazis

Year 10 Coordinator



Mr Jeff Newman

Year 10 Assistant Coordinator



Term Two has been a busy and rewarding period for our Year 10 students as they continue to develop their independence, resilience, and readiness for future pathways.

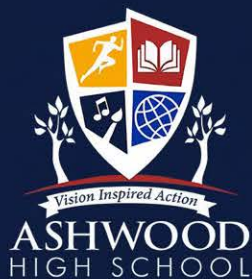
A highlight of the term was our Year 10 Camp at Waratah Bay Beach Camp, a brand-new location for Ashwood High School. Students had the opportunity to strengthen friendships within the cohort, challenge themselves, and build confidence outside the classroom. Through a range of outdoor activities and team-building experiences, students demonstrated outstanding cooperation, leadership, and perseverance. One student captured the spirit of the camp well: *"The beach walks were fun, and I loved the chance to be with my friends away from school."*

For students enrolled in Outdoor Education, a separate sailing camp in Geelong offered another exciting first for our school. Students developed practical skills in resilience, problem-solving, and personal responsibility in a truly unique environment.

Preparation for Work Experience has also been a major focus this term. Students have been actively preparing for upcoming Mock Interviews, developing professional communication skills and learning how to present themselves confidently in an interview setting. It has been pleasing to see students embrace these opportunities with maturity and enthusiasm.

As we move into Term Three, Year 10 students will finalise arrangements for their Work Experience placements, which will run from 14 to 18 September 2026. This important program provides firsthand insight into potential career pathways while building the employability skills that will support future education and career decisions.

We thank all Year 10 families for their continued support and look forward to sharing the successes that Work Experience will bring.



HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Aspire to be Your Personal Best

ACE Program: Background, Scope and Key Dates for Year 7 2027 Applications

Spotlight on ACE at Ashwood High School



Ms Katrina Ketsakidis

*Director of Enrichment and
Professional Learning*

Ashwood High School's Accelerated Curriculum and Enrichment (ACE) Program supports high-performing, highly motivated students who thrive in a fast-paced, challenging learning environment. Across their four-year journey, ACE students also embrace a wider and richer curriculum, including dedicated language and music study and exposure to philosophical thinking, alongside their accelerated core subjects. The application process for the 2027 Year 7 ACE class is now underway, with entry testing scheduled for Saturday 8 August 2026 at Ashwood High School.

Only students who have received a High School Placement Notification for Ashwood High School are eligible to apply. Online registration for the Edutest entrance test opens at the beginning of July 2026 and closes Friday 31 July 2026, with a testing fee of \$100. After testing, families submit an application form, parent/carer and student self-assessment forms, a primary teacher assessment, recent school reports and Grade 5 NAPLAN results, with offers made in October 2026.

Entry into the Years 8-10 ACE Program is by school invitation only and occurs only if/when a vacancy becomes available within the ACE class. Families are encouraged to read our ACE Policy on our school website for more information.

ACE sits within a wider continuum of opportunities for high-ability learners at Ashwood, building students' independence, critical thinking and collaboration well beyond the standard curriculum. This year, a number of students in Years 7 and 8, both mainstream and ACE, have taken part in the Victorian High-Ability Program (VHAP), a 10-week extension programme in English and Mathematics delivered through Virtual School Victoria, culminating in face-to-face masterclasses with high-ability peers from local schools. For senior students, Ashwood's partnership with the Centre for Higher Education Studies (CHES) extends this challenge through to Year 12, opening access to first-year university-level studies and select VCE subjects.

Families are encouraged to mark Friday 31 July 2026 as the registration deadline and visit the Ashwood High School website for full ACE application details.

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Aspire to be Your Personal Best

Spotlight on Debating at Ashwood High School



Ms Khwaish Madan
Debating and Public Speaking
Coordinator



A Fantastic Start to the Year

Debating Club has had an excellent start to the year, with students from Years 7 and 8 enthusiastically embracing the challenge of debating. One of the most rewarding aspects of the program has been seeing so many first-time debaters stand up and deliver their very first speeches. It takes courage to speak in front of an audience, and our students have done so with confidence, resilience, and a willingness to learn.

Throughout the term, students have been developing their skills in public speaking, critical thinking, teamwork, and persuasive communication. It has been wonderful to watch their confidence grow with every debate.

Interschool Debating Success

Ashwood High School has a proud history of participating in interschool debating competitions, providing students with opportunities to challenge themselves against talented debaters from schools across Victoria. These competitions allow students to develop their public speaking, critical thinking, teamwork, and persuasive communication skills while representing the school with pride.

This year has been one of our strongest starts yet, with both our C Grade and D Grade teams delivering impressive performances throughout the season.

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Aspire to be Your Personal Best

C Grade Success

Our C Grade interschool debating team has had an outstanding season so far. The team has won every debate they have competed in, including their very first debate of the year, and is currently tied for first place with another school in the competition.

This is a remarkable achievement and reflects the students' commitment, preparation, and teamwork.

Congratulations to **Miranda Cheng** (Year 9), **Carmen Blackwood** (Year 9), **Mikaela Thomaidis** (Year 9), **Daniel White** (Year 10), **Katania Major** (Year 9), **Bella Boteff** (Year 9), and **Lilly Scott** (Year 9) on their fantastic efforts and continued success.

D Grade Debaters Rising to the Challenge

Our D Grade team has also impressed throughout the first four rounds of competition. These students have tackled challenging topics with enthusiasm and have represented the school exceptionally well. Each debate has shown growth in confidence, argument development, and public speaking skills.

Congratulations to **Aiden Smith**, **Harl Zhang**, **Zaki Johan**, **Daniel Bridge**, **Daniel Yong**, **Catherine Zhou**, **Mihika Sen**, **Shruthi Dhivakar**, **Madeleine Lee**, and **Madeline Tan**, all of Year 8, for their hard work and dedication throughout the season.

Student Leadership in Action

A special acknowledgement goes to our student leaders who have generously volunteered their time and expertise to support the next generation of Ashwood debaters.

A huge thank you to our Debating Prefect, **Isaac Havas** (Year 11), along with **Daniel White** (Year 10), **Miranda Cheng** (Year 9), **Bella Boteff** (Year 9), **Carmen Blackwood** (Year 9), and **CJ Baker** (Year 12), who have all stepped into adjudication and mentoring roles throughout the year. These students have helped younger debaters prepare for competitions, provided feedback on speeches, and shared their own debating experience to support students in developing their confidence and skills.

Their willingness to give back to the program has been invaluable. Through adjudicating practice debates, assisting with speech writing, and encouraging students to challenge themselves, they have played an important role in fostering a supportive and welcoming debating community.

We are incredibly grateful for their leadership, enthusiasm, and commitment to helping younger students grow as speakers and thinkers.

Athletics Carnival Interschool Sport to Date



Mr Tom Grbac
Director of Sport



Mr Declan McLaughlin
Assistant Director of Sport

EMR Cross Country Success: Four Students Bound for State!

Thirty-five of our students proudly represented the school at the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) Cross Country Championships, taking on some of the Region's strongest runners in a challenging and highly competitive event. All students demonstrated outstanding determination, resilience and sportsmanship, giving their best effort on the day and representing the school with pride.

The event provided a fantastic opportunity for our students to test themselves against the top runners from across the Region. From the starting gun to the finish line, our students showed incredible commitment and perseverance, with many achieving excellent personal performances and results.

A highlight of the day was our outstanding result in the 14 Year Girls Age Group, where our team finished as runners-up, an excellent achievement against strong regional competition.

A special congratulations goes to **Gilly McCann** (Year 12), **Holly Gallienne** (Year 9), **Nati Stefanou** (Year 12) and **Sophie Stafford** (Year 8), who all delivered exceptional runs to qualify for the State Cross Country Championships early next term. Progressing through to the State level is a remarkable achievement and reflects the hard work and dedication these students have shown throughout the year.

We are incredibly proud of all 35 students who competed and represented our school so positively. We wish Gilly, Holly, Nati and Sophie the very best as they prepare to compete against the state's best runners and look forward to following their journey at the upcoming State Championships.



OPTIMISM

Reflection and Resilience

Winter Music Concert



Mr Sam Bugeja
Director of Music



Mr Navin Gulavita
Director of Instrumental Music

The Ashwood High School Winter Concert was held on Thursday 18 June 2026 and by all accounts was a resounding triumph. The work, practice and dedication to their craft by the students resulted in a stunning evening of wonderful and pleasant musical sounds. The level of talent and artistry on display by the students was readily apparent to all who were able to attend the sold-out night. We had everything from the Australian Rock classic, "Solid Rock", performed by the VCE Unit 1 Class, a Scottish Reel from Junior Strings, the foundational jazz-funk classic "Chameleon" from Junior Jazz, all the way to a Fugue realised in the style of "Switched-On Bach" by the Synth Ensemble. The diversity of musical styles that the students of Ashwood are able to excel in is truly remarkable and evidence of the well-rounded, creative musicians that they are becoming.

We were also lucky enough to witness the debut performance of many of our Year 7 students in the amazing Junior Ensembles that we have on offer. It is incredible to see, only after a few months of playing, the collaborative and ensemble skills that Junior Concert Band and Junior Strings are already able to exhibit. And before we know it, those students will be captivating us in our Senior Ensembles and VCE cohorts.

The event was inimitably hosted by our Senior Music Captain, **Grace Lee** (Year 12), as well as Head of Instrumental Music, **Mr Navin Gulavita**. The audience warmed to their conceptual, self-effacing style of humour and they set a welcoming tone for the evening. We are deeply indebted to **Kenul Dias** (Year 8), who was our Technical Crew for the night and made all the performers look fantastic in the lighting rigs he was able to set up. Our gracious thanks are also due to **Amasha Gunasekara** (Year 10) and **Chloe Gaultier** (Year 10), who welcomed the audience at the door with a warm and welcoming manner. If you missed the event, our perceptive photographers on the night, **Sasha Perovic** (Year 11), **Mr Harsha Dias**, IT Manager and **Mr Dean Kalaitzidis**, Woodwind Instrumental Music Instructor were able to capture the magic of the night, with some of their great work accompanying this text. Thank you to all the Instrumental Music staff who helped on the night and who worked with their ensembles throughout the term. Lastly, thank you to the true stars of the show, the students who made the evening memorable!



OPTIMISM

Reflection and Resilience



"I had a great time during the concert, whether it was backstage getting banned for practising too much or being on stage and performing to our best abilities. I enjoyed every bit of it. We did so great in Choir; we sang our hearts out and truly enjoyed performing our songs. The Intermediate Band was amazing because we got to show off the pieces we'd been working on for a long time. It was great to see everything come together."

Shruthi Dhivakar (Year 8)

Subject Expo, Subject Selection Evening & Subject Selection Process



Ms Michelle Leane

Acting Director of Teaching and Learning



Mr Tom O'Toole

Senior School Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Pathways Leader

Forging Successful Futures

As our Year 10 students prepare to enter the final phase of their secondary education, they are embarking on an exciting journey of exploration, aspiration and future planning. At Ashwood High School, we are proud to offer a comprehensive and highly personalised subject selection process that enables students to thoughtfully shape a Senior School Program aligned with their interests, talents and future ambitions.

This journey commenced after the wonderful Careers Expo with our Senior School Information Evening which was exceptionally well attended by Year 10 students and their families. The evening provided valuable insights into the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Senior School expectations and the subject selection process. Families also had the opportunity to hear from our Learning Area Coordinators, who showcased the breadth, depth and quality of opportunities available across our curriculum. Their presentations highlighted the engaging learning experiences, academic rigour and diverse pathways that each subject area can offer, reinforcing the many possibilities available to students as they prepare for life beyond school.

The next stage of the process is the Senior School Subject Expo, to be held on Thursday 16 July 2026 (Term 3, Week 2). This event invites students to explore the full range of VCE subjects on offer through a series of interactive sessions and learning experiences. By engaging directly with teachers, participating in subject-specific activities and gaining first-hand insight into course content and expectations, students will be well positioned to make informed and confident decisions about their future studies.

Following the Expo, students and their families will participate in Course Counselling interviews on Thursday 23 July 2026 (Term 3, Week 2). These individual meetings provide tailored guidance as students finalise their programs and consider future tertiary and career opportunities. Together, these experiences reflect Ashwood High School's commitment to excellence, ensuring every student enters their senior years with confidence, purpose and a clear pathway towards future success.

Careers Expo & Morrisby Assessment



Ms Jodie Hechenberger
Careers and Pathways Coordinator

Ashwood High School Careers Expo was a roaring success, with excellent feedback from students, parents and exhibitors. Thank you to all students and parents who came in support of the event. Apart from the wealth of information received from the exhibitors, students also enjoyed extra goodies including lollipops, drink bottles, pens, phone accessories and much more.

Thank you all who assisted with the execution of the expo;

- The student volunteers – **Ameer Bux** (Year 11), **Max Chheang** (Year 12), **Mitchell Chin** (Year 11), **Liyah February** (Year 11), **Laura Gosbell** (Year 12), **Isaac Havas** (Year 11), **Sophie Kuo** (Year 11), **Gilly McCann** (Year 12), **Erin McKay** (Year 11), **Bella McKenzie** (Year 11), **Sasha Perovic** (Year 11), **Emma Sterle** (Year 8), **Sebastian Trent** (Year 12), **Josh Wilson** (Year 12), **Lily Wingate** (Year 11) and **Bonnie Wong** (Year 8) – your organisation and teamwork were seamless.
- **Mrs Julie Huggins**, VCAA Curriculum Services Coordinator, who assisted with setting up and engaging exhibitors, your support is much appreciated.
- **Ms Jennifer Mihan**, Jobs, Skills and Pathways Assistant Coordinator, for the Work-Based Learning Exhibit and assistance with the pack down.
- The Learning Area Coordinators it was fantastic having you back – **Ms Khwaish Madan**, **Ms Stephanie Richards**, **Mr Jay Chan**, **Mr Sam Bugeja**, **Ms Delphine Marie**, **Ms Carolyn Hamilton** and **Mr Ned Hayward**, with the support of **Ms Michelle Leane** Acting Director of Teaching and Learning.
- **Mr Arthur Georgakopoulos**, **Mr Harsha Dias** and **Mr Lahiru Lokuge** for ensuring facilities and IT were in order.
- The PE Department for the use of the gym and assistance with set up and pack down.
- **Ms Sarah Reynolds**, Senior School Assistant Principal and **Mr Tom O'Toole**, Senior School Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Pathways Leader for their attendance.



INNOVATION

Creativity and Sustainability



I am very much looking forward to delivering another successful event next year; see you all there.

On Wednesday 17 June 2026 the Morrisby Profiling commenced for our Year 9 students. Thank you again to all students and teachers who participated in the delivery of this wonderful program. If students have not completed the profile, please do over the holidays – you still have access.

The Morrisby Interviews – this is the interesting part – will commence early next term, and parents and guardians are encouraged to attend. Interview dates will be released via Compass once confirmed.

RESPECT

for Teachers, Students, School and Community

End of Semester Reflection



Ms Sarah Reynolds
Senior School Assistant Principal



Mrs Caroline Servadei
Acting Middle School Assistant Principal

End of Term 2

The end of a semester offers the chance to reflect on the many achievements of our students and staff and look forward to the educational opportunities that await us in Semester Two. Highlights have included achievements across a range of academic as well as co-curricular pursuits including interschool sport, languages, mathematics and science.

In the area of sport, our Years 7&8 and 9&10 Badminton teams progressed to the regional competition and will continue their campaign to become State Champions in Term 3 this year. This outstanding effort has been matched by the 12 Ashwood High School students who qualified for the Eastern Metropolitan Region Swimming Carnival in Term 1 this year, and a further 35 students who qualified for Regional Cross Country.

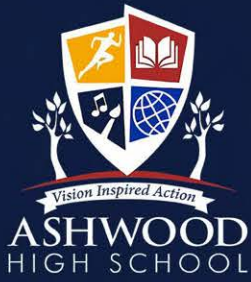
Our students' achievements, however, have not been limited to the sporting field. Six Ashwood High School students will proceed to the finals of the Berthe Mouchette French Poetry competition in August, while five students received Distinctions and 19 students were awarded with Credits in the Computational and Algorithmic Thinking competition held in May. Our students also excelled in the Big Science Competition with three students receiving High Distinctions, six students receiving Distinctions, and 12 students receiving a Credit.

Ashwood High School staff have also been recognised for their excellence in Semester One this year. **Ms Edwina Nolan**, Middle School Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Transitions Leader, presented at the VCE Food Studies Planning Day run by Home Economics Victoria on Wednesday 11 February 2026, while **Mr Michael Scandurra** (Teacher of Humanities) was invited to provide feedback on the Units 3&4 VCE History: Revolutions paper for the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. The school is extremely proud of the expertise and dedication of our exceptional staff and the strong connections that they maintain with their respective professional learning communities. These connections help to enrich student learning and are vitally important for supporting the ongoing growth and achievement of all our students.

Congratulations to all students and staff on a successful Term Two. We wish everyone a safe, rejuvenating, and enjoyable Term Break and look forward to welcoming you back for Term Three on Monday 13 July 2026.

KEY DATES

Monday 13 July	First Day of Term 3
Thursday 16 July	Year 10 Subject Expo & State Cross Country
20 - 22 July	Year 8 Camp
Friday 24 July	EMR Year 8 Boys Interschool Soccer
Monday 27 July	EMR Year 9/10 Boys Interschool Netball VCE Special Programs Day
Wednesday 29 July	Year 9/10 Interschool Sport EMR Year 11/12 Girls' Interschool Hockey
Thursday 30 July	Year 10 Course Counselling Day EMR Year 8 Girls' Interschool Soccer
Friday 31 July	Principal's Awards Ceremony EMR Year 11/12 Girls' Interschool Badminton
Monday 3 August	Whole School Assembly EMR Year 7 Girls' Soccer EMR Year 9/10 Girls' Interschool Netball
Thursday 6 August	Curriculum Day (Pupil-free Day)
Friday 7 August	EMR Year 9/10 Interschool Sport Badminton
Tuesday 11 August	Year 10 Mock Interviews
Friday 14 August	Year 10 Careers Day
17 - 21 August	Year 9 Morrisby Interviews
Friday 21 August	EMR Year 8 Interschool
25 & 28 August	Student-Led Conferences
Wednesday 26 August	Parent Information Evening – French Study Tour 2026
Thursday 27 August	Year 8 Interschool Sport
Friday 4 September	Year 7 Interschool Sport
Thursday 10 September	Mullum Division Athletics Carnival



KEY DATES

10 - 11 September

House Performing Arts Festival

14 - 18 September

Year 10 Work Experience

Friday 18 September

End of Term 3