



Family Update - Week 5

Friday 13 August 2021

Dear Hurlstone students and families,

As we cross over the halfway point of the term, we can take a moment to reflect on how much we have achieved together in such a short yet tumultuous period.

Student updates

It has been a big week for Year 12 students as the NSW Health COVID-19 vaccination program launched on Monday. We have been working closely with families in Greater Sydney and our boarder families in the regions to resolve any outstanding issues with this process. We are pleased to see the high rate of vaccination registrations from our school, the last of which were completed yesterday. Thank you for helping to keep our communities safe.

As we continue to operate under Level 4 restrictions, our Year 12 students will not be returning next week but instead will continue to learn from home until advised otherwise. In order to support our students in line with the latest NESA and Department advice around school-based assessment, the Trial HSC examinations have been replaced by alternative assessment tasks which will be completed online. HSC students received a bulk assessment task notification in a single PDF on Wednesday in an effort to minimise any further stress around this.

Year 11 students and their families received information today about the Evidence of Learning tasks which are replacing the yearly exams and will be completed from home during Weeks 9 and 10. After consultation with our Head Teachers and their faculties, our teachers have been working to design formative assessment tasks which are differentiated to challenge our students and provide avenues for meaningful feedback. We know that effective feedback is one of the most powerful influences on student achievement (*What Works Best*, 2020), as it helps students to calibrate their understanding and empowers them and their teachers to target areas for improvement. It is important that all of our students reflect on and apply the feedback they receive to foster academic growth.

Years 8, 9 and 10 students have begun their subject selection process for 2022. Our thanks go to Mr Craig for setting up such a comprehensive website which captures all of the information students will need to make their decision regarding their elective choices in Year 9 (2022) and 10 (2022) and their course selection for Year 11 (2022) and Year 12 (2023). Students are reminded to check their school emails for information about the online submission platform. The deadline for preferences to be submitted is 3pm Friday 27 August.

Year 7 continue to excel in their learning online and we thank our families and Year 7 teachers for working in partnership to make their experience more manageable, as for many this is their first time learning from home with a daily timetable online. Our Year 7 Advisors Ms Elderton and Mr Holmes have been deliver fun and engaging wellbeing activities for students and are available to support our students as they make their way into this new way of learning. Students are encouraged to stay connected with their teachers via MSTEams and take regular breaks in order to help manage their cognitive load.

Celebrating good news

Hurlstone's Rural Youth are in the limelight again, having received the results from the online sheep judging and sheep handling competition they entered just before the school holidays as part of the QPL Rural Youth Sheep Expo. In the under 12s division, Leena Read placed 1st in the Handlers' class while Jade Tellis placed 1st in the Junior Judging and 2nd in the Handlers' class. Jade also received high point champion. We also had students enter in the 13-15 years class. Three year 8 students took out the top three places in Junior Judging: Annabelle Lewinski (1st place), Aleena Zacharius (2nd place) and Raifah Rahmen (equal 3rd place). In the Handler's class, Lucy Anderson of year 7 placed 1st, Sukanya Dasgupta of year 7 placed 2nd and Suvarn Moodley of year 10 placed 3rd. We are incredibly proud of the outstanding results of our students in representing our school, which was named Champion School thanks to their efforts.

We welcome Rebecca Ross as she returns to our school as relieving Deputy Principal. Rebecca has an outstanding portfolio of accolades and achievements and has worked at our school in previous years. Rebecca specialises in instructional leadership, high potential and gifted education and learning support, advocating for quality learning environments and effective differentiation of the curriculum for all learners. She models high expectations and clear communication and I know she will be a valued team member and support for our community.

This week also saw the arrival of our new relieving Head Teacher English, Rosemary Gyenge, to our school. Ms Gyenge brings her experience as a Senior Education Officer with the Transformation Directorate to the role as well as a strong background working with high potential and gifted students at Baulkham Hills High School. We are pleased to welcome Ms Julie Johnson, our new Head Teacher TAS who joined us at the start of the term. We have a strong Executive team and this is only strengthened further with the addition of our two new Head Teachers.

Wellbeing Matters

Wellbeing remains at the heart of everything we do. Our school staff will continue to reach out to students throughout the week to check in with students – please note that these calls will come showing no caller ID as our staff are working from home.

Mr Krishan, Mrs Davis, Mr Seblani and Ms West have been busy attending to items left behind in the boarding school and in lockers. Any students requiring books or other materials from their lockers should email us at hurlstone-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au with 'Locker request' in the subject line. This will be forwarded to our staff living on site for action. We are grateful to have such an outstanding support team as our SASS staff work tirelessly behind the scenes to keep our school running smoothly.

Please remember to take some time out to look after yourselves and celebrate the little wins of the week. Staff have been sending some kindness with cards and well wishes to each other. Some have 'adopted' a staff member as their secret Kindness Angel, orchestrating secret treats and surprises via post. This is helping to keep our spirits high given the high workload and challenging circumstances they are navigating on a daily basis.

While online learning presents the inevitable challenge of more screen time than usual, we want to remind all of our students to have a mindful moment and go outside, do something enjoyable and come back refreshed next week.

Stay COVID safe

Should anyone in your home be impacted by a positive COVID-19 result, please let the school know. We want to support you and your children and keep our school community safe and well.

Best regards,

Christine Castle, Principal and the Senior Executive
Hurlstone Agricultural High School



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