

Gunnedah High School Newsletter



**Excellence
and
Innovation in
a Unique and
Caring
School**

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Welcome Parents/Caregivers to the Newsletter

Over the course of the vacation period two very significant announcements were made regarding our school. They are as follows;

1. The proposed Food Technology Kitchen upgrade was announced. This has approved funding of \$625,000 and work will commence at the beginning of the October vacation and should be completed by the end of the Christmas vacation period. This will give us an outstanding 'Certificate II standard' kitchen.
2. Gunnedah High School has been selected as a school to participate in the National Partnerships – Low Socio-economic Status (Low SES) School Communities program. This will give our school additional funds up to \$590 000 per year for the next four years. This Partnership aims to transform the way that schooling takes in identified schools, recognising that entrenched social and educational disadvantage are major barriers for children and young people.

The Low SES National Partnership is targeted at getting the best quality teaching into the schools where it's most needed. In addition to quality teaching initiatives, schools will also be able to undertake a number of reform initiatives, including closer engagement with business and the community as well as extending the services their school offers.

Through this partnership we will undertake a focussed set of reforms with the clear aim of making a measurable difference to the educational outcomes of our students. In implementing the reforms, we will focus clearly on:

- Using a menu of reforms to put in place new strategies that can effect measurable change – with teacher quality as the first priority
- Identifying and addressing individual needs of students
- Accountability for achieving outcomes with transparent planning and reporting
- Ongoing evaluation of reforms to refine their implementation.

Schools will be required to include as mandatory elements of their plan:

- Actions to improve the availability of high quality teaching
- Professional development for school executives and teachers to help them use and analyse student data (e.g. NAPLAN) to cater to student needs.

Once the mandatory elements are undertaken, schools would still have a significant sum of additional funding with which to select other reform options. Existing and redirected resources would also be available. This is a very exciting time for all of us.

Our School Development Day will be held on 19th August. This is the Wednesday of Ag-Quip. Professional Learning for our staff will be centred on

the Digital Education Revolution (DER) and the staff will be trained in the five modules developed by the DET. Many thanks, in advance, to Murray Borham, Barry McRae and Andrew Urquhart for their development of this day.

By the time you read this Newsletter, one of our senior students, Sam Schubert will be competing at the National Short Course Swimming Championships in Hobart, Tasmania. We wish Sam all the very best for these championships and I am sure the experience will be one that he treasures.

Can I wish all Yr 12 students the best for their Trial HSC Exams which start on Monday 10th August. I hope your preparation has been fruitful and you perform to your potential.

Below is an article which I have read since the last newsletter that you might find interesting.

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Mental health: silence the worst reaction in schools with cluster suicides

Lauren Wilson & Stephen Lunn, the Australian, July 23, 2009

PARENTS of teenage children have been warned that the risk of suicide increases among young people who know of someone who has taken their own life or talked about wanting to commit suicide.

Child and adolescent psychologist Andrew Fuller said about 5 per cent of all youth suicides occurred in clusters because feelings of despair, especially among teenagers, were "contagious".

Dr Fuller's comments came as Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon and Victorian Premier John Brumby expressed sympathy for families at a Geelong High School where four students have killed themselves within a six-month period.

"Teenagers are such emotional, impulsive beings," Dr Fuller said. "Especially among vulnerable people, feelings are contagious. We have to make sure that hopefulness gets around and the despair doesn't."

"The most powerful way to do that is to promote those resilience factors that make people less inclined to self-harm and suicide and we need to make children realise that life is worth living."

Child psychologist Michael Carr-Gregg said parents who had children that had been exposed to suicide should open discussions with their teenagers about the issue.

But he said the focus of those discussions needed to be moved away from the tragic result of suicide and refocused on depression itself.

"When people are depressed they are not in their right mind. Depression distorts moods, it destroys the capacity of rational thought and it erodes the desire to live," he said.

Dr Carr-Gregg said parents needed to communicate to their children that depression was an illness that responded to treatment.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/l8tsup>

Until the next Newsletter

Rod Jones

Principal

Ag-Quip Pupil Free Day:

Wednesday 19th August 2009

Attention all students, parents & carers. Please note that **Wednesday 19th April 2009** is a **pupil free day**, due to the Ag-Quip Field Days.

The Week Ahead:

Friday 7th	Jeans for Genes Day
Monday 10th	Year 12 Trial HSC Exams commence
Wednesday 12th	International Youth Day
Monday 17th	Year 12 Trial HSC Exams conclude

P & C Association:

A reminder that the next P & C Association meeting will be held on **Wednesday 16th September 2009**, in the GHS library commencing at 7:00pm. The August meeting has been postponed due to Ag Quip. All parents/guardians, grandparents, carers and community members are welcome.

GHS Canteen Volunteers required:

GHS Canteen Supervisor, Mrs Sharon Newell, is sending out a call for 'volunteers' to assist in the operation of the school canteen during Term 3. Many hands make light work, so **your urgent assistance is required**. Contact Sharon on 6742 1110 during school hours.

GHS Uniform Shop:

If you have been waiting on any items of clothing we are now fully stocked. All orders have been filled. These can be picked up during normal shop hours:

Tuesday 8:00 – 10:00am

Thursday 1:00 – 3:00pm

If you have an outstanding layby (ie 6 week or more) can you please ring us on 67426939 during shop opening hours or on 0437052331 to let me know if the layby is still required and to arrange payments to suit. If we don't hear from you it will be returned to stock.

The new Winter Polo Fleecy Zip Jumper has arrived and is now available @ only \$39:95 each, and the new GH (Go Hard) 'school caps' are also available @ \$12:00 each.

The new GHS 'winter uniform' is now also available.

NB: School 'Tracksuits' are still available from the GHS main office @ \$90:00 each.

or Tracksuit Tops only @ \$55:00 each and Tracksuit Bottoms only @ \$35:00.

The school advises that hooded tops in multi colours are not an acceptable alternative to our uniform.

GHS "Back to Schooldays Celebration Ball":

The Back to Schooldays Celebration Ball, that was to be held at the Gunnedah Services & Bowling Club Auditorium on Friday 7th August, has been cancelled due to lack of ticket sales.

MS Readathon:

Due to popular demand, the MS Readathon reading period is now any 30 days in June, July or August 2009, with all completed forms, and sponsorship, to be returned by August 31st 2009. **To register, click on to www.msreadathon.org.au or ask your teacher for more details.**

DET Information Message-Swine Flu

This year it is likely many more people will come down with flu-like illnesses than in recent flu seasons because few people have immunity to the human swine flu virus. As a result, we all need to take steps to minimise the transmission of the virus in school communities.

Staff or students who become unwell should stay away from school until they are well, so as to minimise the risk of transmission. Any student who identifies that they are unwell, or is displaying flu-like symptoms at school, will be sent to a sick bay area and their parent or carer will be contacted to take them home.

Please watch carefully for any signs or symptoms of flu-like illness in your child including fever, cough, tiredness, muscle aches, sore throat, chills or shortness of breath. NSW Health advises that some people are more likely to be affected by seasonal influenza or swine flu. These include people who:

- * Have chronic lung disease – including asthma.
- * Are very obese.
- * Have chronic heart conditions.
- * Have chronic kidney or liver disease.
- * Have blood disorders – including sickle cell disease.
- * Have neurological disorders.
- * Have metabolic disorders including diabetes.
- * Have weakened or suppressed immune systems – which may be caused by cancers, medications or HIV/AIDS.
 - Are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background – of any age.

If you or your child is in one of these categories, please seek urgent medical attention as soon as the symptoms of flu appear, because you need anti-influenza medication and it works best if given early.

Additional health information is available from the H1N1 Influenza 09 section of the NSW Health website at -

www.emergency.health.nsw.gov.au/swineflu/index.asp

Year 8 & 10 Subject Information Evenings:

Changes – Challenges – Opportunities. Planning for the future. It's certainly a very interesting time for all Year 8 & 10 students, as they prepare for further education. During the past week, 4th & 6th August 2009, we invited all parents, carers & students to attend 'subject information evenings' to assist them in the decision making process for the students further education.

The evenings provided information on:

- Subjects offered for Year 11 in 2010.
- The subjects available for selection in our 3 elective lines in Year 9 for 2010.
- School Certificate, Preliminary Course & Higher School Certificate course requirements.
- Vocational Education & T/Vet courses availability.
- School based traineeships.
- Subject Information Booklets, for prospective students, are now available at the Gunnedah High School main office.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the GHS on 6742 0155.

As our Year 8 & 10 students plan for their further education, we would like to thank all the students, parents & carers who attended the Year 8 presentation on Tuesday evening 4th August 2009. The Year 10 presentation will take place tonight, Thursday 6th August 2009, and a large attendance is anticipated.



Australian Red Cross: Senior First Aid Course

The Australian Red Cross will be holding a Senior First Aid Course in Gunnedah on 26th & 27th August 2009 at a cost of \$160:00 per person. Successful participation in this course will result in the issue of a Statement of Attainment for the nationally endorsed unit of competency, HLTF301B Apply first aid, from the HLTO7 Health Training Package. For more information and bookings contact Community College Gunnedah on 6742 5630.

2008 Annual School Report: Gunnedah High School

Copies of the report are now available from the main office.

Preview Evening for Year 6 Students & Parents

If you currently have a child in Year 6 at primary school, you and your child are about to experience the first of many challenges to be faced, as they progress through their school education. To make this transition a little easier, we held a 'preview evening' last Wednesday 5th August 2009 to provide all parties concerned with as much information as possible. Features of the evening included:

- Displays by faculty areas and participating students.
- Outlines of academic, cultural & sporting programmes.
- An overview of curriculum patterns.
- Musical items including drama performances & guest speakers.
- Open forum to discuss any queries about policies & procedures.
- Delicious supper provided by our GHS hospitality students.

We are now accepting "expressions of interest" for Year 7 students for 2010. For more information, please contact our main office on 6742 0155.

2009 Cancer Council Relay for Life:

Has your family or friends been affected by cancer?

Well, here's your opportunity to help raise much needed funds and awareness to continue the research into finding a cure. Team nominations of 15 members, are now being accepted for the Cancer Council's 2009 Gunnedah Relay for Life, to be held at Kitchener Oval commencing at 6:00pm on Friday 30th October. The Gunnedah High School has set a target of entering 20 teams, and raising over \$20,000 for the Cancer Council. Our students of today are our community leaders of tomorrow, so we are looking for strong support from students, teachers, staff, parents/carers and relatives for this wonderful cause. Just 24 hours of your time could make a big difference, and you are guaranteed to have a good time. For more information, and team nomination sheets, please contact GHS Community Liaison Officer Ray McCoy. Don't just think about it...do it!

Administering prescribed medication at School:

In general, schools do not administer medication which has not been specifically requested by a medical practitioner for an individual student for a specific condition.

When a medical practitioner has prescribed medication that must be administered during the school day, parents are responsible for:

- Bringing this need to the attention of the school.
- Ensuring that the information is updated if it changes.

- Supplying the medication and any 'consumables' necessary for its administration in a timely way.

The administration of such medication forms part the Department's common law duty of care to take reasonable steps to keep students safe while they attend school. This duty of care is fulfilled through its staff members.

Key points to remember:

- Parents of children who require prescribed medication to be administered at school must complete a **written request**.

The school will provide the form to the parent.

If parents have difficulty in completing the form they should ask for assistance.

- Students must not carry medications unless there is a written agreement between the school and the student's parents that this is a planned part of the students health care support.

Please note: Students' immediate access to prescribed medication is very important for the effective management of conditions such as asthma. Students and parents need to be advised of this requirement so that students are not left without access to critical medication.

NAIDOC: Flag Raising Ceremony

A special NAIDOC 'flag raising' ceremony was held at the school on Monday 3rd August 2009, to celebrate and acknowledge the indigenous members of our community who have lost their lives during internal conflict in Australia.



The Black Dog Institute

A free community education night titled "Building personal resilience for life's challenges" will be held at the Gunnedah Civic Theatre on Wednesday 26th August 2009, commencing at 7:00pm. The Black Dog Institute specialises in depression and bipolar disorder, and all community members are welcome. Guest presenter will be Matthew Johnstone and light refreshments will be provided.

Lost:

1 pair of glasses: They were found on the basketball court on the 16th June 2009.

For more information, or to claim the glasses, please contact Mrs Hertslet