



Hunters Hill High School

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# The Figtree

THE JOURNAL OF HUNTERS HILL HIGH SCHOOL

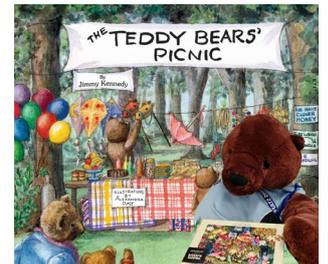
## Term 3, 2021



### HHHS Book Week!

In the spirit of having a bit of fun, and maybe make a few people smile, we hope you enjoy some photos from our fabulous students, wonderful staff, children of some of our staff and pets of some of our student and staff to honour Book Week 2021!

A big thank you to Ms O'Donnell, Mr Pickles, Ms Guan, Ms Zhou, Ms Banerjee, Ms Mazzitelli, Ms Polak, Ms Sibley, Ms Harris, Ms Filippakis, Ford Prefect - The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (Dilan), Roller Girl (Sabian and Eleni), Jo Jo the Cat (Kingston) and Scythe Lucifer from the Arc of Scythe series (Felix) and of course Hunter the School Mascot for being part of the fun!



## Message from the Principal

First of all, I want to thank our community for all its support over the last term. It would have been easy to get frustrated with a situation we are all unfamiliar with but the response we have received has been great. Parents and carers have been prepared to work with us and that is a reflection of our great sense of community. Thanks particularly to those who have thought to send us a positive email or post because they can be passed onto staff and support their sense of achievement. It is much more difficult, I think, to get a sense of satisfaction from your teaching when you are isolated, so it has been good for staff to get that positive feedback. Thank you too to those parents who found the bakery time and dropped off, in a COVID safe way these sweet treats.

It has been a changing tapestry this term of assessments for Year 12, and it has been gratifying how well the forced changes have been accepted. Parents and students alike have been positive. Thank you for your belief that we will do everything to make the process as fair and accessible as possible.

Now that we have some clarity around what the HSC is going to look like I understand it has been frustrating to see it pushed back twice and students might be feeling like they'd just like to see it over with let's be positive about what it means. Even while people might just want the whole thing over, by the time it actually begins it will, it seems, give some opportunity for students to get some face to face revision and an opportunity to deal with any gaps or misunderstandings. This is important because it has hardly been a normal learning year. Moreover, it will give Universities time to make whatever offers they think appropriate considering the disrupted year. Year 12 students really need to stay in touch with our Careers Advisors to make sure they are over the opportunities that will arise.

So far, we have had fantastic cooperation with our community in compliance with the public health order requirements. No doubt there will still be a number of these in place when schools gradually return. To make the return of students as smooth as possible, can I ask you to be aware of these and make sure they are followed. It will be counterproductive if things get in the way of face to face learning if they can be avoided.

One important thing did happen this term. The school was due for its External Validation which is the process whereby schools are examined against the school excellence framework. This involves the school presenting a variety of programmes, both curricular and extracurricular, student work samples, videos of lessons, examples of assessment tasks, reports, feedback given to students, examples of parent communications, attendance rate and procedures, NAPLAN and HSC results, enrolment trends and student attitudes via the Tell Them From Me survey. This varied and aggregated information is then examined by an independent panel and compared to the excellent framework which has fourteen individual elements in broad areas of Leading, Teaching and Learning. The school community was represented in this process by the President of the P&C Ms Jacqueline Crompton. Overall, the school fits into the second highest of the four categories "sustaining and growing" but the validating panel noted that in a number of individual elements, the school is clearly approaching "excelling" and is on target for this in 2025.

As I write, it is still not clear what exactly we will be able to do regarding things like Year 12 Graduation and formal, as well as other end of year celebratory activities. Whatever the structure, we will endeavour to do something that marks the end of Year 12 time at high school.

It has been a challenging period which will go on for a while yet. It has, however, underlined the importance of the strength of our community.

**Greg Lill**

## **Deputy Principal's Report**

In what has been an eventful term we have seen the continued enthusiasm of staff and students to make the best of what has been an incredibly challenging time. However, we have seen a quick shift into the online world and witnessed the transformation of teaching and learning through the world of Zoom and Teams!

Staff have been inventive in ensuring that lessons have been catered for, using our 4C approach to teaching and learning. The focus of our learning has been on skill development and not just significant amounts of content. This has been achieved through the continued focus of our Pedagogy Team who have worked hard to deliver strategies through Twilight Evenings, Staff and Faculty Meetings to ensure that our students are consistently engaged and challenged in their online studies. Additionally, many of our additional support services in Wellbeing have moved online and we have seen our Year Advisors shift to checking in through Year Meetings and keeping our students up to date through their individual year group Google Classroom pages. Additionally, our Learning Support team have worked tirelessly to ensure that they can help our students deal with all the additional challenges that students have faced in Term 3.

We have also seen many traditionally important events move online. This has seen our Parent Teacher evenings shift to using Zoom and the Year 8 and 10 Subject Selection evening operate online. The school has been overwhelmingly grateful for the uptake of the community to utilising these forms of communication and we endeavour to continue to utilise these methods of delivering critical information during Term 4 of 2021. Additionally, we have seen our Trial HSC period move to online assessments and the Year 11 Preliminary Assessment period also move to this form of delivery. Whilst challenging for students and teachers alike, we hope that this has also been a period where students have learnt critical skills that they can utilise when they enter post-school life.

Term 4 will present a different set of challenges as we eventually transition back into face-to-face teaching and school life. There will be a staggered or staged approach to students returning to school in a COVID safe way.

We hope that students, parents, and carers will take the upcoming September break to rest and recharge and get ready for the remainder of the year. The staff at the school look forward to welcoming students back to the school grounds for learning when the time comes and reuniting the school community.

Lastly, we would just like to thank the entire school community for their fortitude and messages of support during this time. We know that families are putting in the extra effort to ensure that students' academic progress, health and wellbeing is being catered for and we are grateful for all your efforts to assist us to provide the best outcomes for the students at Hunters Hill High School. We will continue to provide additional communication at the beginning of Term 4 about the phased return to school for students.

We hope that all families enjoy the holidays and that students get a well-deserved break away from their computer screens.

**David Sherwin (Relieving Deputy Principal Years 7, 9 and 11)**

**Michelle Donovan (Deputy Principal Years 8, 10 and 12)**

# Careers News

Have mercy, what a term it has been.

Well done to Year 10 for taking such a proactive role in subject selection. The process was a bit more complex for you, but you did such a good job of picking up the support and information available to you. I'm so excited to see how many of you are thinking outside the box and taking on TAFE-delivered, electronically-delivered and school-delivered VET courses. What an amazingly qualified cohort we will have on our hands!

Well done to Year 11 for getting through the last term of the academic year by distance. You've shown strength and dedication through tough times, and I hope it's something you can draw from and reflect upon in coming years. I'm really looking forward to working with you more closely over the next 12+ months.

Year 12, the resilience, strength, and adaptability you've demonstrated for the last 2 years are not to be downplayed. Please be aware that the support the school has shown you doesn't end with the school term, and that you can reach out to us for anything.

While we stay in our state of Remote Learning, you are welcome to connect with the Careers Department in the following ways:



Make a booking: <http://www.picktime.com/careershhs>

Follow us on Instagram: @hhsccareers

Sign up for Job Jump: <https://hunters-hill.jobjump.com.au/>

**Nikki Polak**

**Careers Advisor**

 Australian Government  
National Mental Health Commission

## Pandemic Fatigue

While we can all experience pandemic fatigue in different ways, it is possible to counter its effects. Look out for some of these signs in yourself and those around you and take practical steps to be kind to yourself, stay connected, check in with each other, and seek professional support when needed.

Some of the feelings and behaviours you, or someone you know may be experiencing include:

- Tiredness
- Frustration
- Low in energy
- Restlessness
- Irritability
- Hopelessness
- Difficulty looking forward to tomorrow
- Dread
- Not wanting to be with others
- Increased use of alcohol or other substances
- Lack of enthusiasm for things you would normally enjoy

Some of the most effective ways to overcome these feelings include:

- Identify and practice self-care strategies that work for you 
- Keep kids communicating Let children know it is ok to be worried, and talk it out 
- Get sweaty Exercise is great for mental health 
- Reach out To those who may not have connections 
- Follow facts from trusted sources 
- Take a break Do the things you've been putting off for a rainy day 

If at any time you feel overwhelmed by any feelings, it is important that you talk to someone you trust. A GP, family member or friend, or make contact with any of the services (available 24/7) below:

Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Services: 1800 512 348  
Lifeline: 13 11 14  
Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800  
[www.headtohealth.gov.au](http://www.headtohealth.gov.au)

## **Lock down life with Mrs Patten - Eat. Work. Sleep. Repeat.**

The first few weeks of lockdown were a novelty. To give you some context, my husband and I have two children, one in Year 3 and one in Kindy. In the initial stages of lockdown, "fun mum" (as my children like to occasionally call me) was out and we made sure we did lots of baking, bike rides and board games.

But then the lockdown was extended, and the monotony set in. I found, like many of our students, that my working life was starting to take over my family life. The kitchen table had turned into a workspace. The lounge room had become an office and my family, and I did this bizarre ritual whenever we had a zoom call in order to sit in the only quiet space in the house.

We'd get to the end of the day and feel emotionally drained.

But something spontaneously happened about six weeks in. We realised that we were in this for the long haul and something needed to give. The balance in our lives had been tipped and we found ourselves living to work ... as opposed to working to live. The baking had been replaced by barking orders at each other. The bike rides had become a chore in order to stem the guilt of sitting at a computer all day. The board games were non-existent.

So, we decided to make a change. It was laborious at first and took some effort, but we managed to get some balance back. Each night (at about the same time as we'd normally finish work for the day) we'd do a super quick "tidy up". The computers, books and diaries would be stacked and hidden for the night. Any remnant of the working day would be replaced by our familiar family things.

This small change helped switch our mindset. At the end of the day we could allow ourselves to relax and reconnect as a family. It wasn't always perfect (and there would be times when one of us had to keep working) but that was pre-covid normal and we didn't get the post-covid guilt.

Now this might not work for everyone, but it's important to try and find *your* balance. It's important to allow yourselves time to switch off. In this pandemic, there is no one fit for all. It might take a few strategies to find one that works for you and it may not work every time. It's important to remember to forgive yourself. Your emotions, your stress, your anxiety is all normal. We can only control the controllable, and one of those is your mindset. You will not "fall behind". You will not miss out on learning. What you're learning right now in terms of resilience, independence and coping skills is just as valuable in the adult world as curriculum content.

One thing that helped my family was time management. It is difficult for the best of us so having a chart or a reminder on your phone is a good idea. Sticking to a routine has also been beneficial.

In the morning, get up at the same time as you normally would. Eat breakfast, get dressed and try to squeeze in a quick walk around the block - let's face it, you'd normally start the day by walking to school. Try to have regular times for morning tea and lunch, and ensure you finish for the day at a reasonable time. Because there are no "after-school" activities, try to use this time to again do something physical. It might be to get the milk and bread for the next day or to tidy the house ready for the evening. Eating meals together as a family, where possible, is also a great way to reconnect. Winding down in the evening with a book and a cuppa somehow sets the tone for the next day.

We know there will be ebbs and flows. That's life. But if we try to create balance, we can sustain this mindset.

**Eat. Work. Sleep. LIVE.**

**Repeat.**

# R U OK Day 2021

This year Hunters Hill High School celebrated R U OK Day by organising a Wellbeing Day for students.

Students were encouraged to participate in active, creative, and collaborative activities and learning for the day. To acknowledge all the students' hard work and persistence we wanted to provide an opportunity for the students to balance their online learning with offline learning experiences for the day. The students who submitted their work went into the running to win 1 of 5 \$30 Westfield Gift Vouchers. The winner will be announced at the end of term.

A number of students also participated in a lunch time games session with the Lane Cove Youth Workers. The students who regularly attend the Lane Cove Youth Centre enjoyed connecting with the Youth Workers again. If the students would like to continue this connection they can get in contact with the Youth Workers by emailing [youth@lanecove.nsw.gov.au](mailto:youth@lanecove.nsw.gov.au). They are running an after school online "Lets Connect" program on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

We hope all Hunters Hill High School students and families had the opportunity to spend some time with each other and check that loved ones, friends, and family R OK, especially this year during the pandemic. Here's some tips on how to ask R U OK.

[https://www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask?utm\\_source=R+U+OK%3FDay+participants+newsletter&utm\\_campaign=33d3b90f6c-EMAIL\\_RUOKDayParticipants\\_RUOKDayemail\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_d7e81f0865-33d3b90f6c-355975480&mc\\_cid=33d3b90f6c&mc\\_eid=5a42736e50](https://www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask?utm_source=R+U+OK%3FDay+participants+newsletter&utm_campaign=33d3b90f6c-EMAIL_RUOKDayParticipants_RUOKDayemail_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d7e81f0865-33d3b90f6c-355975480&mc_cid=33d3b90f6c&mc_eid=5a42736e50)

**Tara Harvey**  
Student Support Officer



## Hunters Hill Community Connection Project

The Hunters Hill Community Connection project provides a series of short video clips with members of our community sharing experience and connection. The premise is that perhaps in the current situation many of the wonderful elements of our school community are difficult to access: smiling faces, impromptu conversations, moments of success and failure, eye contact.

Through these short video interactions, we can provide a glimpse of some of these wonderful human interactions and share the positives and challenges of working remotely as a part of the Hunters Hill High School community.

We hope you enjoy watching the videos which are posted to our school FB pages, Sentral and can also be found on the Wellbeing Hub under HHHS News and Updates – see the link below.

<https://sites.google.com/education.nsw.gov.au/hhhs-stayathome/hhhs-news-updates>

**Mike Neild**  
Hunters Hill High School



## Help is here

### Lifeline

Phone: 13 11 14

Chat online at:  
[lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au)

### Kids Helpline

Phone: 1800 55 1800

Chat online at:  
[kidshelpline.com.au](http://kidshelpline.com.au)

### Beyond Blue

Phone: 1300 22 4636

Chat online at:  
[BeyondBlue.org.au](http://BeyondBlue.org.au)



# Wellbeing Hub!

There are lots of great resources which are updated on a regular basis on the HHS Wellbeing Hub. Click on the link below:

[https://sites.google.com/education.nsw.gov.au/hhhs-stayathome/home?fbclid=IwAR0kAtIzqoLPZA4wVZStobhf2Fe\\_fXtpRqAoKlyXtYo6QXr-trcMvKXUro](https://sites.google.com/education.nsw.gov.au/hhhs-stayathome/home?fbclid=IwAR0kAtIzqoLPZA4wVZStobhf2Fe_fXtpRqAoKlyXtYo6QXr-trcMvKXUro)

To see the latest updates on Motivation, Webinars and Wellbeing (Update 6 September 2021) click on the following link directly to the Wellbeing Hub.

<https://sites.google.com/education.nsw.gov.au/hhhs-stayathome/hhhs-news-updates>

**Stay safe. Stay well!**



*A place for the Hunters Hill High School community*

I am a student

I am a parent/ carer

HHHS News & Updates

Subject Selections for 2022

Virtual Orientation Day



## **Happy Holidays – School resumes in Term 4 with remote learning for all students on Tuesday 5 October (Week A)!**

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

I would like to thank you for all your efforts through Term 3. A reminder that our last day of term is this Friday, 17 September 2021.

In a term that saw us quickly shift back to remote learning, I have been impressed by the ongoing commitment that our students have displayed as they have continued their learning online. As such, we encourage students and their families to have a well deserved break over the holidays to refresh and get ready for what promises to be a busy Term 4.

The school will continue to follow the advice of the NSW Department of Education and the Public Health Orders from NSW Health that apply to school situations in relation to operations for Term 4.

***This will see all students return to remote learning on Tuesday, 5 October 2021. (Week A)***

### **Year 12**

The school will begin a phased return during Term 4. At present, Year 12 will have full access to school from 25 October (Week 4). We will provide additional information about the activities and structure for a planned return for Year 12 in the early phases of Term 4.

### **Year 11**

Year 11 will begin their HSC courses remotely at the beginning of Term 4. Mr Sherwin will communicate information about the HSC information evening at the beginning of Term 4. He will also continue to provide updated information about Year 11 and their planned return to on-site learning from 1 November (Week 5).

### **Years 7 to 10**

Further advice will be forwarded to our Years 7 to 10 students and families as we progress through Term 4. At present, Years 7 to 10 will return to on-site learning from 8 November (Week 6).

Once again, I would like to extend my thanks to the community for your support during Term 3.

**I wish you all a happy and safe holiday.**

Kind Regards,

Greg Lill

Principal

## **HHHS WEBSITE**

The HHHS website is updated regularly! Please take the time to go to our site for updates, important information about our school, photos, videos, upcoming events and important dates.

**[www.huntershd-h.schools.nsw.edu.au](http://www.huntershd-h.schools.nsw.edu.au)**

### **CONTACT US**

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